

I Dreamt This Was My Home: Construction of Forest and Rural Settler Identity in Mission, British Columbia

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Abstract

As places for rich sensorial and symbolic experiences, forestry recreation sites provide contact not only with biosphere ecology, but with tropes and values expressed through managed 'nature space'. Articulating these tropes and values reveals that 'nature' itself has been socially constructed and conceptually intersects with power, including rights of access and production of capital. By bringing multimodal research-creation practices into contact with my own production of place-based knowledge in the forests of my hometown in Mission, British Columbia, I assemble a situated account of spatial narratives and ideological work taking place in managed, recreational forests of the Fraser Valley. In so doing, I also demonstrate ways of provoking reflexive interplay between sensory impressions, poetic meanings, dominant narratives, and knowledge. After forming analyses through documentary research, situated encounters, creative process, and critical theory, I present the two overarching arguments of this project: 1) ideological work around jurisdiction and enclosure takes place in rural communities through managed nature reserves and ossified narratives in 'natural zones' and 2) multimodal creative research can be used to notice ways that sensory and poetic meanings of a site are entangled with knowledge and power structures and to illuminate occupations and construction of space, place, and imagination.

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Introduction

To introduce it briefly, my research-creation project examined how I relate to forestry spaces in my hometown of Mission, British Columbia. Mission is part of the Fraser Valley, an area outside Vancouver that centres around the river for agriculture and milling, and backs onto vast mountain ranges. It's also an area of boundaries established through seizures and enclosures of land, internment programs and reservations. I suspected the nature sites, which are both highly experiential and highly managed, would intersect with meaningful social and spatial narratives. I wanted to know how my identity and knowledge might be implicated – and how they could be simultaneously used as prisms to illuminate occupations and construction of space, place, and imagination.

I describe in the first chapter the process by which I realized that I (and others) inhabit stories that help make the world real and explain its arrangements. I wanted to know why some stories have had such a grip in the Fraser Valley, and what it means to belong to them or not. I started with the intuition that something meaningful was there, feeling my way through once-familiar terrain of the forest parks. Coming back here meant all kinds of encounters. My critical perspective only developed after I had moved away. Coming back, I found myself critical of not only the spatial constructions, but my own identity. I came face-to-face with previous constellations of myself and with assumptions I found disturbingly present in different formations. It was like tangling with a monster sometimes, especially when I pursued an intuitive sense of inarticulate structures, fumbling and grasping at giant root hairs in the dark.

Meanwhile, theories helped me put words around the fumbling. I drew first and repeatedly on Lefebvre (1991), who wrote about how power relations, especially in capitalism, produce ways of

relating to space, which obscure the way people, time, and resources are being arranged preferentially – or in other words, are occupied by power projects. The arrangements come to seem natural, like a bedrock. With Haraway (1988) and others, Lefebvre invites the senses to deconstruct spatial narratives. Studies of sound and space convinced me that stories can be embodied and sensed in what are taken for natural aspects of the world, sensorially contributing to realities. And colonial literary tropes such as the Manichean dichotomy and spatial readings such as Foucault's (1984) heterotopia can aptly frame narratives of *legitimation* and *enclosure* expressed by forest parks, especially in the context of local discourse and settlement history.

As a method, research-creation spoke to the privileging of discovery and partial demoting of direction. Play and creativity are revealing and can be deeply eloquent. Making art has been a constant part of my life's expression, from poetry and fiction to audio composition, diorama and photography, and painting and drawing. I have learned that these are ways of processing, refracting, distorting, disgorging, and observing knowledge and perception. I engaged with multimedia art making in addition to field visits and sensory observation. This sensory and imaginative creation was continually interacting with the historical and documentary research I was doing. The interaction suggested points and structures of entanglement. I produced a wide range of multimedia material which further directed the research; a fraction of this ended up in the manuscript but was part of the process and analysis. Chapter Four and Five consist of multimedia process work and a soundscape composition with video collage, respectively.

My engagement with public documents was also exploratory and started with the space itself. Realizing I didn't know the names of many plants and ferns I encountered at Hoover Lake prompted me to find the official forestry page for the site (via Google) and a series of public-facing

documents about forestry and local operations that might discuss local silviculture. As well as information on planting and some legal obligations of tending a tree lot, I also learned that the municipal license to operate the tree farm was somewhat unique – so I investigated how tree farms are typically allocated in British Columbia and why a town might want to organize that way.

In other words, a simple question led to plenty of noteworthy details, many of which opened new questions. For example, the Forestry Department and local history documents were vague when mentioning the initial tax-related land forfeiture that led to the municipal forest reserve in 1945 and convinced the province to grant the municipality a long-term forest tenure on adjacent Crown land. I could not find this record within the timeline of my fieldwork, and the archive holding the records did not return my appointment request. That is not to say the information could not be found, only to say that as part of the front-facing public narrative, the details of the land transfer were not apparently included. Detail like this were too numerous to explore each in their own right, but they textured my work.

The reference to texture is not incidental; texture was one of my central concepts. By texture, I mean a group of sensations or phenomena that have been lumped together and seem natural, pervasive, or like a ‘background setting.’ A textural relationship is very informative, but it does not draw attention to itself as such. Playing with textural perception is one way of re-evaluating what is perceived as a bedrock. Taken for granted, the texture presents suggestions of what is possible or allowed in the world. Much of my field time was spent probing and considering what was coded as ‘texture.’

Asking the same question about on-site trees and plants, this time at Rolley Lake, led me to a different set of documents. Rolley Lake is managed by the provincial government (also previously cleared for farming by Japanese Canadians before their internment during World War II). The initial query for botanical information led me this time to the *BC Geographic Names Society*, which leads its website with a proclamation of the Crown's right to assign the names of the features in the territory. The research was now intersecting with the divine. This led to a new set of literature about cartography and Christian ontology within land expropriation schemes in British Columbia. In short, several new intersections opened through this simple question about plant names. Through field visits, creative media making, and documentary research, I experimented with changing perspective to generate, observe, and deconstruct knowledge.

During all this, the sites, which were so close to me and my family became difficult to visit for a few reasons. As I have mentioned, I sensed histories and crimes warped into the aesthetics and ideals of these "wholesome spaces." Even the undeniable link to family memories was becoming painful as the last two years saw my loved ones encounter unprecedented struggles, including health and personal emergencies. So when I came here, the tone felt different for many reasons at the same time, and contact was extra tender. In other words, it took me a long time to articulate this project, even as I was in the middle and end of it, and even as I was undeniably finding my knowledge of local forests to be deeply transformed.

This is fitting because it turns out the project is all about troubling articulation. Tumorous understandings of everyday activities were forming, rubbing against the grain and inflaming me. Even the most casual turn of the spade unearths festering colonialism here. I began to learn how zoning was essential to the process of allocating resources preferentially and extrapolating 'rights'.

The language around nature and industrial management revolved around zones, and zones were produced by an ontological orientation towards supremacy, category, and hierarchy. I connected that orientation to my experiences, too. The practices of parcelling land not only produce managers and owners, they also produce categories that underlie my impressions of the forest, the sacredness of the fence, and the nobility of the lawn. How could I express this shattering and expanding sense of knowledge? As I continued to research and create using prompts of sensory observation and art making, I realized it could have been any number of constellations that formed from the explosion of awareness.

In the end, as I have been describing, I began to cluster around concepts and acts of zoning and enclosure – from cartography to *heterotopia* and homes for daydreaming. Heterotopia is a concept developed by Foucault (1984) to describe spaces where social realities are reversed by enclosure and staging, which suggest mirrors or microcosms of preferred social realities and obscure undesirable social elements, like crime or sickness. Typical examples include places like prisons or hospitals where the everyday flow of social life does not apply, or gardens, where time and space are idealized. Other poetic and psychoanalytic explorations of imagery, such as Bachelard's tracking the shape of home through spatial poetics, helped me trace narrative architectures I sensed resonating in forest spaces, and how they relate to settlement mythologies of enclosure.

Homing these themes through site encounters and research, I had fascinating encounters with phenomena like the broadband-defined car movement in the backwoods and how the road system produced bodily knowledge. Similarly, I encountered local projects like the Mission Heritage Association, whose public historical work promoted a Manichean paradigm of colonial legitimacy.

Another thread that emerged was the role of trucks and truck financing in shifting relations of labour and access to capital. These facets, just a few examples of many more, converged in spaces that had been “full enough” to satisfy me previously as a visitor. While I ultimately seized on a few situated, dominant themes, I have come to think of this thesis as a prototype and experiment with research-creation methodology in generating thick, multimodal, interdisciplinary studies of place.

Reflecting on the project, I know there are more conclusions to draw about working with this kind of messy method. For one thing, it was difficult to control the impulse of myself as a creative ‘generator’ once it was turned on, and it was only after a certain scale that I began to see connections and feel unnoticed shape around me. How to predict or control for the needs of scale – and ‘decompression’ time – became a core challenge. At times I wanted to follow every path, but my supervisor and other advisors reminded me that a thesis needs boundaries and delimiting. The process of doing that required me to learn techniques for containing mess and setting the generator’s limits, so to speak.

Many useful measures were only apparent in retrospect. With time, the aftershocks continue to outline terrain in new ways. Also, as time goes on, more creative and poetic resonances will continue to come out of the jumble. These thick portrayals of rural space will invite investigations that continue to link constructions of place not only to regional development but also to national and global projects and power structures. At the same time, the practice of assembling a story in several dimensions has illustrated my responsibility and potential in reflexive world-making as well as deconstruction. To conclude, it has been messy but generative, and the techniques I have used can be experimented with further.

Structure of the Thesis

The work consists of four approaches to understanding the site that are meant to overlay each other, rather than be considered linearly. Each resonates with and casts light on the others.

In Chapter One, I provide context for the project, describing the development of my research questions, the geography of the Fraser Valley region, and my own investment and situation. I lay conceptual groundwork for research-creation methods and establish the theory and literature upon which my analysis is based. I present the two overarching arguments of this project: 1) ideological work around jurisdiction and enclosure takes place in rural communities through managed nature reserves and ossified narratives in 'natural zones' and 2) ways that sensory and poetic meanings of a site are entangled with knowledge and hegemonic narratives can be sensed using multimodal creative research. I present the case of myself and hometown forest areas in Mission, BC.

Chapter Two argues that the same constructions of Canadian wilderness that underlay my formative play in forestry space were also used to legitimize the colonial government of British Columbia and its right to allocate land. Thus, one role of nature is to demand continuous 'ordering' of terrain and its 'contents.' Since its formation as a colony, British Columbia has created and delegated centralized management bureaus, corporations, commissions, ministries, offices, and registries to formulate authority over specific lands and resources. This express relation has remained more or less intact throughout different configurations of nature and resources over time, including counter discourse about First Nations sovereignty, changes in labour and industry, legal territorial challenges, preservation movements, and backwoods cultures that challenge official norms.

Chapter Three deals with *fantasy space* produced by the design of recreation sites in Mission and the types of experiences they prime for and suggest. I show that the forest park can function as what Foucault (1984) termed a 'heterotopia.' As a space set apart from daily life, but full of ordered meaning, it generalizes settlement histories across this region and offers an immersive environment of botanical and pioneer aesthetics for imaginative and performative play. Through multimodal play in and with the 'grounds', or taken-for-granted aspects of an environment, I home in on performance of world-building in forest recreational play, as well as the imaginative modes produced by the spaces.

Chapter Four is a creative reflection on methods I use to push my perspective or break up perceived spatial features and narratives for re-constitution. It proposes that the metaphors, multimodal provocations, and processual structures involved in art making can introduce encounters between held, dissolving, and appearing knowledge. New awareness can respond to previously unnoticed structures and entanglements. Through written discussion and selections from my multi-media processing journal, I reflect on my main practices and the modes of experience and knowledge they generate.

Chapter Five inverts the text-illustration structure by presenting an audio composition and experimental visual interpretation of my changing relation to forest space, accompanied by a short creative text. The components of the chapter together consider themes investigated in the other chapters through nonverbal collage that provokes sensory imagination, impressions, and lingering questions that may deepen, unsettle, or colour the themes and concepts of the work. The 6min27 audio-video piece explores fantasy and material worlds as mediated by unstable knowledge.

Finally, the conclusion draws some key implications and suggestive findings, as well as reflects on the project and its challenges.

CHAPTER ONE TRAILING HOME IN A STRANGE FOREST: ENCOUNTERING PLACE-BASED KNOWLEDGE

"In so far as one denies what is, one is possessed by what is not, the compulsions, the fantasies, the terrors that flock to fill the void" - Ursula K. Le Guin *The Lathe of Heaven*

"So much for those of us who would still like to talk about *reality* with more confidence than we allow to the Christian Right when they discuss the Second Coming and their being raptured out of the final destruction of the world. We would like to think our appeals to real worlds are more than a desperate lurch away from cynicism and an act of faith..." -Donna Haraway, "Partial Knowledges"

Introduction

What I know begins with where I am, and where I am begins with what I know. This multimedia project instigates encounters between myself and four connected forest nature parks in my hometown of Mission, British Columbia. I use research-creation as an approach to spatial critique and sensory autoethnography, put to the task of articulating and analysing spatial relations in north Fraser Valley forest parks. My encounters arise through situated observation, art making, and documentary research. Considering managed nature parks as sensorial, potent settings for 'pre-fabricated' experience, and affective on a personal level, I ask what stories, identification, and realities they assume and produce. Analysing forest parks as meaningful spatial and ideological nexus, I also investigate how, as a member of the town and third-generation settler in the province, I have co-constructed world-making narratives with/in those spaces. The process leads to new understanding of conceptual and material habits of relating to place and governance.

Two overarching arguments that emerge from this project are 1) ideological work around jurisdiction and enclosure takes place in rural communities through managed and ossified narratives embodied in 'nature zones.' This set of public narratives and orientations obscures both

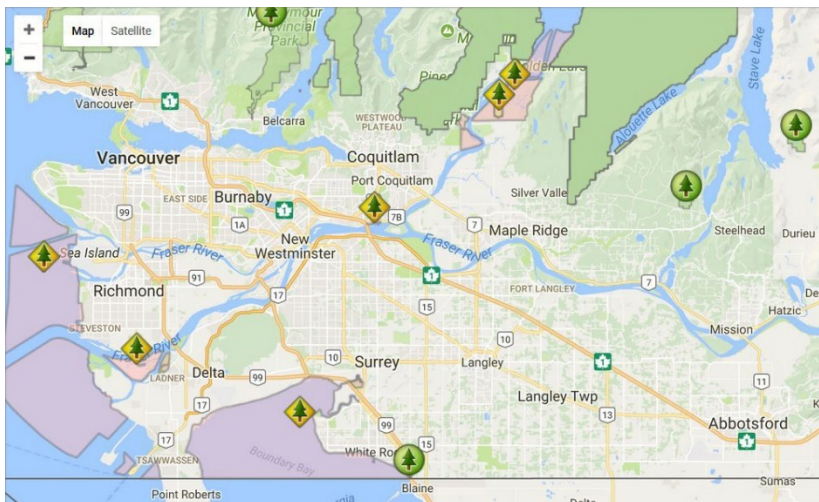
the forms of dispossession underpinning local land title and the relocation of community relations through managed nature. 2) Multimodal creative research allows new ways to illuminate where personal sensory and poetic meanings are entangled with spatial management, knowledge, and hegemonic narratives or ideologies. Understanding how rural identities and places co-evolve and develop legitimating narratives demands situated accounts. As a means of constructing such accounts, research-creation allows movement between types of self-awareness and reflexivity and generates new ways to observe and connect phenomena.

This chapter organizes and introduces the project, describing the site and offering some historical context, situating myself and my development of research questions, sharing my methodological approaches, and introducing some literature that helped shape the analysis. In the following pages, I take some time to thickly convey Mission's situation in the frontier-settlement paradigm, as it unfolded through my physical and documentary encounters with its spaces.

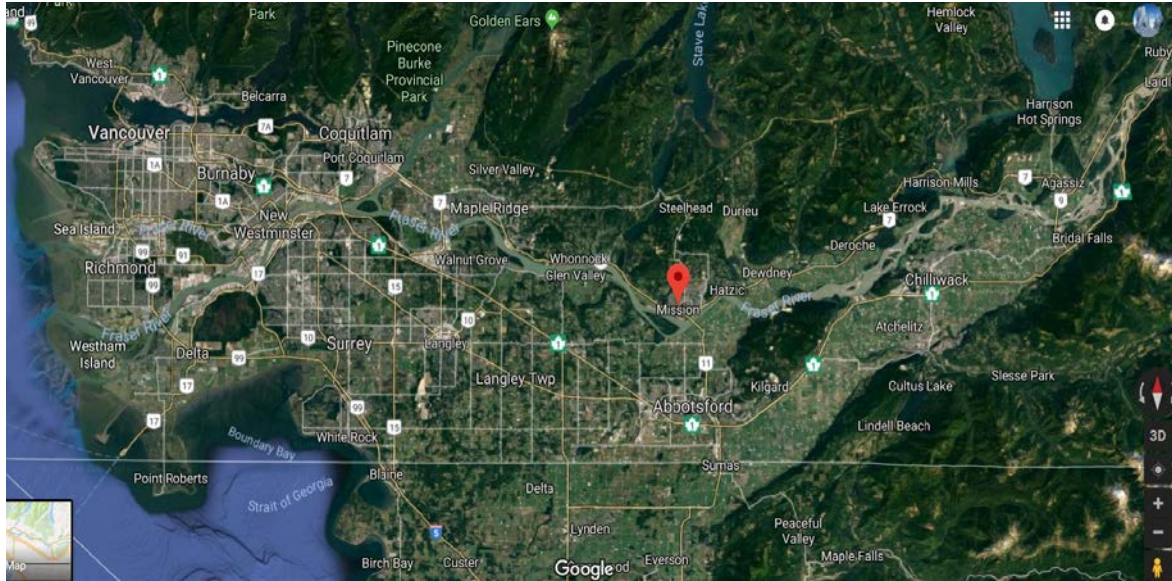
The wilderness and settlement narratives that my research highlights are hegemonic in the sense that they obscure and legitimate regimes of enclosure – of bodies and land – enacted by government and spheres such as colonial settlement, real estate speculation, land development, resource extraction, asset management, and so on. Access to these spheres shifts historically with definitions of 'the community' and its values, with pressure to increase capital production, and with programming of 'desirable communities'. Justifications for handling of resources, including land itself, are embedded in stories that imbue spaces with normative claims. Evaluating these explicit and implicit claims can orient attention to questions of power and justice.

Welcome to the District of Mission

The District of Mission is located on the southern the west coast of British Columbia, to the north east of Vancouver along pastoral flats of the Stó:Lō, renamed the Fraser River by colonial geographers (Buker, 2011, pg.1). It rises north of the river in residential foothills that blend into tree-covered terrain at the northern edge, leading to vast mountain ranges. A predominantly working-class demographics, with significant unemployment and crime (Statistics Canada, Census Profile 2016, Mission), Mission was one of the earliest Canadian colonial settlement projects along the West Coast. With a population of around 36,000, the district maintains a low-density backwoods program that contributes to its rural atmosphere, with marshy boundaries that border into unincorporated districts, including several First Nations reservation allotments.



1 Map of the parks in the Lower Mainland and west Fraser Valley region (Parks BC 2017)



2 Satellite image of Mission with map (Google.ca/maps)

The river flats were also farmed by Japanese berry farmers from the 1900s to 1930s, whose robust community was displaced and dispossessed by internment in the 1940s, including the seizure and liquidation of their property and a ban on returning to British Columbia¹ (Mission Museum, 2017, *Lost Pioneers*; Roberston & Oikawa, 2017). The flats now are occupied with wood processing, quarrying, and minor farming (“Our Community Plan,” pg. 35) as well as a drag racing facility and riverside walking trail. Immediately parallel to the river on the north side, beside the railroad, is Mission’s historic Main Street, which has suffered neglect at times and been the subject of development conjecture and by-law development for decades.²

¹ The Mission Museum notes that the property seizure “included at least 90 farms (totalling over 1,400 acres of land), and at least 100 vehicles” (Mission Museum, web, *Lost Pioneers*); Lorene Oikawa recounts that her grandfather, who had owned a strawberry farm in Mission for 30 years before 1942, was put to road labour after being interned and having his property seized (Robertson & Oikawa, 2017).

² For example, see Mission’s 2013 Action Plan; Mission’s 2008 Official Community Plan (pg. 74)



3 Main Street, Mission

The forest that thickens to the north figures prominently in Mission’s municipal branding, reporting of local productive activity, recreation and tourism projects, and current development partnerships and real estate advertising.³ Trees occupy a significant portion of Mission’s topography, blending from private acreages into multi-managed Crown land and industrial operations, into the expanse of the Pacific Coast Mountains and the water systems networked throughout them.⁴ Much of the local forest has been managed as a municipal tree farm for several decades, beginning officially in 1958⁵ (District of Mission, 2017, “Municipal Forest”). Other wooded areas and waterways are operated for hydro-electric generation or assigned as recreation and conservation areas under the stewardship of BC Hydro and the provincial parks service (BC Parks). Recreation sites in the backwoods are managed to different extents, some highly interfaced and

³ For example, the Stave West Master Plan is a multi-stakeholder plan to develop the Stave Lake backcountry area of Mission; see also Mission’s official website, “About Us”; and Destination BC, “Mission”; and Department of Forestry, “Mission Municipal Forest (TFL26)”

⁴ The backwoods in the north are the site of developments for logging, quarries, energy extraction, water supply, landfill, residential acreages, recreation, and extreme sports

⁵ Mission’s land cover is 40% tree farm, most of which is operated by the Municipality on Crown Land with various levels of oversight in terms of silviculture programs, licensing, contracting, harvesting, processing, and shipping (see “Mission Municipal Forest (TFL26)”)

patrolled and others accommodating less regulated use.⁶ Other natural recreation areas, such as streams and small lakes, are accessed through private property.⁷ The Council also mandates a minimum canopy in residential and business areas and a ten-metre buffer of trees between industrial operations and roadways.⁸

In local narratives of the town's founding, the priests performed early settlement activity, but 'progress released by steam' marks the real beginning of development. In a piece of teenage poetry, I describe the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) train bridge as an "ancient spine" (author's personal files, undated). Older than my family's presence in Canada, the train asserted both the infrastructure that mobilized commercial trade and settlement in the west and the visual and sonic imagery that framed the days and spaces where I grew up. It is not surprising that the train, the first high-speed mass-mover of resources across land, represented early local history to me: colonialism is the current base upon which settlers are integrated and the train is a recurring theme in Canadian national mythology.

Harold Innis (1923) explores how railroad technology activated and mobilized Canadian economic nationalism, which connected resource production sites like Mission with the rest of the country and its global markets. However coherent the railroad narrative seems, as David McNally (1981) points out, the railroad cannot be naturalized; it did not merely 'open' staples markets but became situated according to political projects and produced new relations of capital and labour.

⁶ The three sites that I visited are monitored and do not allow all terrain vehicles or gas boat motors, but nearby Stave Lake is a motorboat and ATV destination.

⁷ For example, a Mission neighbourhood group on Facebook had an intense argument about accessing a waterway through a private driveway (see Bibliography: Mission BC Neighbours and Friends); passed and proposed legislations have addressed access to waterways as well as freedom to access Crown range land (e.g. see proposed 'Right to Roam Act')

⁸See District of Mission Zoning By-Laws (2009-2017) and District of Mission Official Community Plan 2017, pg. 28

For example, rail impacted independent loggers across British Columbia, who could not leverage rail infrastructure for monopoly land access, nor streamline their operations to the same scale. Their labour became compartmentalized and contracted by centralized logging firms. In Mission, land speculator James Welton Horne bought and auctioned 250 lots in advance of the CPR stop completion in 1882, leading to the first influx of settlers. Lot subdivision and auction have been a through-line of Mission's history from first colonial surveys to the present. It is also worth noting that the 1882 CPR stop in Mission was built on the original site of St. Mary's Residential School, which was relocated (Mission Museum, "Timeline of Significant Events"). In short, Mission was both a religious and commercial real estate operation.

Before more contemporary communities, which included First Nations people being relocated from other parts of the province and country under colonial regulation, the ancestors of Stó:Lō peoples had settled the area for the last 10,000 years, making it one of the oldest known human settlements in the region and the locus of several archeological and cultural sites. At the time of colonization, the area was home to several nations, notably Kwantlen, Musqueam, Katzie, and Qayqayt, whose communities were programmatically disrupted by colonial management of land, restriction of the lifeworld, relocation, violence, and death. Violence and interference in Indigenous communities by colonial church and government were highlighted by the 2007 Truth and Reconciliation Report, which included information about residential school conditions and experiences in Mission. Today the Stó:Lō Nation represents communities across the broader region. The Kwantlen people, whose traditional territory includes Mission, have formed a business entity to act as a stakeholder of their community ("We are Kwantlen First Nation").

Finally, like in many Canadian towns, resource industrialization plays a role in public heritage branding and local museology, as well as in contemporary conceptions of land and progress. Hydroelectric energy infrastructure and sustainable forestry (logging) are promoted as examples of resource success. Several BC Hydro operations in the area are now classified as heritage sites, with recreational trails featuring earlier energy technologies and interpretive texts about resource development.⁹ As I delve in the next chapter, early settler infrastructure operations appear as pioneering in wild space, rather than superimposed over previous resource planning and relations with space. In other words, figures of *frontier* and *settlement* are prevalent in Mission's outdoor aesthetics, heritage projects, and municipal imagery.¹⁰ These images are loaded, through literature, education, local culture, and so on, with normative connotations, symbolism, and associations with frontier creation.¹¹

Homesteading and resource industry are used to rationalize occupation and attach new forms of infrastructure and governance to places, as my next chapter delves into further. Settlement is mobilized by the dangers of the wild (at the frontier) as well as by needs of consumption. Dangers of the wild are answered with *homesteading*, consumption needs met by *industry*. Neither could take place without a concept of the wilderness.¹² This trichotomy—homesteading, industry, and wild nature—continues to locate rural economic and social progress narratives at the frontier. Work of bounding and legitimizing a community with local identity

⁹ e.g. the BC Hydro Railroad Trail and the Reservoir Trail (BC Hydro Recreation) literally superimpose hydro-electric resource heritage tours on the physical space of Kwantlen archeological sites (McLaren, 2011); see also the Stave Lake Power House Museum (BC Hydro) and Rolley Lake interpretation program (pending) ("A Plan for Rolley Lake").

¹⁰ I will explore them specifically in the forest recreation context in Chapter Three

¹¹ See Chapter Two

¹² e.g. see Willems-Braun (1997), Ljungberg (2001).

implies not only an ideal citizen (and excluded *Others*) but proposes a 'nature' of the place to support these categories and their expression.¹³

The Mission Historical Society, for example, hosted a "celebration of art and memory [which] features 25 works by Grade 11 and 12 students inspired by historic photographs of Mission dating from the early 1900s to the 1940s" (Mission City Record, Feb 2017, "Mission Ready to Celebrate"). These referential photos included community building imagery, such as parades, early resource industrial sites, settler houses, the train bridge, town patriarchs, and modern machinery of the time, but did not associate historical narratives of alienation and trauma, nor account for the production of property titles. It is not surprising that the imagery would avoid touching on injustice. "[T]he study of history," wrote Edward Said, "which of course is the underpinning of memory, both in school and in university, is to some considerable extent a nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a desirable loyalty to and insider's understanding of one's country, tradition, and faith" (Said, 2000, pg. 176). It is provocative to consider that school learners used their bodily gestures—visual mark-making—to identify with the settler historical project by literally replicating the curated/collected images of its archive in imitative art. Another site for imitation and replication is the heritage forest park.

Through policy developments that I outline in *Chapter Two*, governments and resource corporations have continued to manage not only 'working land', but interfaces through which members of the public can habitually or recreationally access forestry spaces. These public-facing forest sites not only signpost the domain of Crown land or other appointed managers, but they

¹³ e.g. See Pierre Nora (1989), Doreen Massey (1990), Edward Said (2000).

make space for preservation activity and recreational homesteading to become expressions of local citizenship values. Simultaneously, forest parks, which often follow industrial infrastructure, affirm the benefits of industrialization and the role of centralized management by serving as ideal microcosms of broad-ranging ecological practice. This orientation can be unsettled by considering that the creation of industrial conditions proposed the markets for Canadian resources (rather than vice versa) and required procurement of dispossessed people to sell wage labour, not to mention the underlying territorial expropriation.¹⁴

Since the federal Natural Resource Transfer agreements of 1930s, around ninety-four percent of British Columbia land surface remains in Crown possession, and nearly half of that is forested.¹⁵ The land allocation is characterized by different provincial publications and ministries as an asset, a wealth, and a fortunate circumstance for the province.¹⁶ The forest network has been associated with rural economies, future security, past heritage, and social responsibility. Of course, it has also been implicated in territorial, regulatory, ecological, and trade disputes and controversies.¹⁷ In short, 'management' of public space implies management of its histories, uses, and relations. In that sense, as a regular park visitor, I not only used the space, but was managed as a user by the site's configurations and policies. I demonstrate in other chapters that these norms

¹⁴ See David McNally (1981); Ellen Meiksins Wood (2002); Glen Coulthard (2015); Willems-Braun (1996) and others discussed in Chapter Two

¹⁵ Roger Hayter (2000) pg. 39; Government of British Columbia 2017, "Accessing and Using Our Natural Resources."

¹⁶ See examples in Chapter Two from various forest-related provincial ministries and the BC Jobs Plan

¹⁷ e.g.: Territorial challenges to BC Crown land and assertion of First Nations territorial rights have been presented from the start of occupation to the present; "An Investigation of Forest Renewal BC" from 2001 looked at the lack of care taken with the time and finances of struggling forest sector workers, who were offered "transition" training of doubtful value and incorrectly instructed on tax filings for provincial benefits, which ended up penalizing the owner-operators involved in the program; see the discussion in Chapter Two of the dispute between the Kwantlen First Nation and BC Hydro over long-term resource planning.

did not merely 'emerge' in response to environmental features but were grounded in epistemologies and ontologies that presupposed colonial relations in Canada and British Columbia.

Situated Research Context (Visceral Post-Modernism and Personal Re-Mediation)

Any discussion of southern British Columbian rainforests, for me, will evoke earliest childhood memories. The local forest loomed large in my rear-view mirror—literally—and interwove my understanding of family, home, wilderness, community, and mythology. My parents came from elsewhere, but I grew up here. My mom tells me that we lived in a pod while my dad built the house with his own hands on a plot of land in Steelhead, where property might still 'come cheap' in that pre-housing-bubble time. For almost a year we waited for electricity and plumbing. Just like in the stories I grew up reading of Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House in the Big Woods," we had to be aware of resources—for example by strictly conserving well water—and at night, coyotes would sneak into the coop to steal the chickens.

The church people came once to help clear the rocks from our yard. No neighbours for kilometers, just tall trees. The forest thickening around our homestead like a multiplicity of tunnels. Beautiful and terrible things dwelled there, like bobcats and bears, and creatures that lived inside—or were?—the dark spaces and holes under roots. You couldn't hear any trains out there, but instead heard chainsaws and birds, wind and trees. After we moved to the suburbs when I was about eight, the forest remained waiting for our many excursions.

Similarly, any project performing deconstruction resonates with a formative moment that viscerally altered my understanding of reality, when I experienced cognitive dissonance as a swift and traumatic rupture. It happened while I was walking down a quiet country road in the nearby farm-flats of Abbotsford (the city directly across the river) on a cloudy afternoon. At the time, new

interpersonal encounters were challenging the socialization and sheltering that I had experienced as a life-long member of two fundamentalist communities in one of Canada's strongest Bible Belts, namely the Charismatic Pentecostal and Mennonite Brethren denominations.¹⁸

That day, the post-harvest cornfield was silent, and I felt an enormous sense of solitude and emptiness. Just as my isolation felt complete, a flock of crows hidden in the chaff shot up and levitated in unison so suddenly that the air crackled and clouded black. They looked like a streak of ink dispersing, hundreds of them above my head. The field had not been empty at all. In that instant, I had an epiphany: the fundamentalist worldview, through which I had understood social realities, science, and morality, and which organized my life routines, appeared in a vision around me as an architecture built across various planes and dimensions of space and discourse, inside which I had been set to wander. It was a frightening moment when I first understood how shaky some 'realities' could be, yet they might still convince or enclose me...or form my identity.

This new knowledge, specific to religious world-crafting, immediately implicated other circumstances. I started to perceive multiple virtual architectures that were shaping my understanding of the material world. For example, the pervasive settlement narratives in my hometown, once examined, revealed missing narratives associated with its violent colonial past and present exclusions. As a settler, I was also complicit in occupations of space and knowledge taking

¹⁸ These denominations share some emphases (e.g. purity, abstinence) but are also different; at the same time, religious communities in the Fraser Valley overlap in membership (e.g. religious education may be Mennonite Brethren, while a church community may be Pentecostal or other). In my case, I was embedded in Mennonite family culture and Pentecostal religious culture, both of which are heavily present (and at times quite politically active) in the region.

place in the region, but growing up, we were never taught about 'occupation' or 'dispossession,' neither at school nor in church.

My mother's parents were first and second-generation Canadian Mennonites who had immigrated from Russia and Germany. My father immigrated here as a small child to join his Slovenian father, who died in a mine collapse before I was born, his Austrian mother, and his new Canadian siblings. But from my earliest memories, we spoke only in English and considered the Lower Mainland our home. While a working-class position meant my Opa died in unsafe labour conditions, my mom's father—himself a refugee—was able to take advantage of cheap land opportunities in the Fraser Valley that were only available to him through previous disenfranchisement of others, particularly of First Nations people and Chinese and Japanese immigrants. As I learned more about the region, my sense of continuity and justice were thrown into question, along with my understanding of the community and the origins of our connection to each other.

I identified the forest as one of the sharpest points of alienation from my sense of 'home'. My most persistent nightmares and fondest recollections have taken place in the forest, where we lived relatively remotely when I was a child. In my fiction and art produced over the years, the forest has stretched and morphed into shadowy labyrinths where dangers lurked. The forest also represented my disillusionment—the optimistic gloss tarnished as I got older and reconsidered local 'wild spaces' as not only recreational sites, but sites of environmental degradation and crime. I wondered why I knew nothing specific about the lumber trade that provided the district's early economic activity (along with the railroad and Chamber of Commerce) or the global resource management firm that organizes the water supply. I wondered how I had breathed the oxygen of

trees for my life without thinking about the dynamics through which they existed or the shape of spaces introducing our encounters—or considering the fact that the oxygen I relished was mingled with crop-dusting treatments, and that the forest might also be a farm.

Over time, as I engaged with critical theories of mediation and knowledge, my questions became clearer. How had colonial and capitalist assumptions about place and identity been integrated into my personal narratives? How had I been able to take such constructions for granted as part of 'the world' (especially considering how shaky these assumptions seem to me now)? What could I learn by re-approaching familiar places and familiar knowledge with altered perspectives? Through what kind of methodology could I do so?

Fieldwork sites

I conducted field visits to four forest parks in Mission's backwoods during the summer of 2015, observing the flows and features that contributed to the 'theming' of my experience in the woods (including some of its inherent contradictions). I selected general recreation areas, which featured activities such as nature walks, hiking, fishing, non-motorized or electric-only water activity (rowing, kayaking, canoeing, windsurfing, swimming), picnicking/barbequing, small beaches or lawns for play or sunbathing, ecological and historical interpretation, viewpoints, and flora/fauna. There are other areas in the forest where specialized activity takes place, such as mountain bike trails or terrain utilized by ATVs. The sites I chose are not only familiar to me, but popular public gathering spaces. I visited Hoover Lake twice, Mill Lake once, and Rolley Lake and Hayward Lake three times each between June and August of 2015. I made two follow-up visits each to Rolley and Hayward during August and September of 2016

Mill Pond

Mill Pond, at the foot of the Bear Mountain trail network, sits at the side of Dewdney Trunk Road (a dump-truck and backwoods traffic artery). The trails winding up to the top of Bear Mountain are shared by hikers and mountain bikers and are regulated and groomed by the Mission Municipal Forest and the Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association (District of Mission, 2017, "Bear Mountain Overview"). This site was never well-known to me as a thick, nuanced place, but was instead a familiar roadside landmark on the way into the forest. It was also a convenient place to adjust a load or take a phone call; the proximity to a busy through-way gives it the appearance of a pleasant, scenic roadside stop. It also provides FOB-controlled water access for locals to supplement their well-water supplies.

Hoover Lake

Of the sites, Hoover is the least developed for recreation, with little to no infrastructure provided aside from trail maintenance (e.g. limited vehicle access and signage, no washrooms). The Mission Municipal Forestry Department oversees the logging project and public access at Hoover Lake, where parts of an earlier corduroy road remain. The hike is about four kilometers up a steep gravel road, or a key to the gate can be signed out from the municipality for four-by-four access. Because Hoover was a quick drive from our home, a short hike, and a lake well-stocked with fish, my father would take me and my sisters to fish, hike, and paddle throughout the seasons (although rarely in the snow). We usually met other fishers, people walking their dogs or hiking, or occasionally forestry workers (although the site is closed to the public during harvesting operations) (District of Mission, 2017, "Hoover Lake Closed").

Hayward Lake Reservoir

The Hayward Lake welcome sign names *BC Hydro Recreation Division* as operator. The energy utility manages the site as part of the Stave Canyon system hydroelectric projects. Hayward Lake is a popular hangout for young people and families, and it includes wheelchair access; a separate dog beach; resource heritage interpretation (signs and infrastructure artefacts); trails; swimming; a boat launch (no motors); and a large, well-groomed picnic lawn with barbeque pits. Throughout my life, Hayward Lake has been a popular destination for my family for afternoon picnics on hot days (the lake is particularly fresh for swimming). I also spent time there with friends as a teenager, and still go once or twice in the summer when visiting the Fraser Valley.

Rolley Lake

Rolley Lake Provincial Park and Campground is operated as a conservation and recreation area by the British Columbia government. It features wheelchair access; a small, partly eutrophic lake; a mulch-carpeted lakeside trail; a waterfall hike and viewpoint; camping sites; and light trout fishing. During camping season, the grounds are usually full regardless of weather. The picnic and hiking areas are also popular destinations. Most years during my childhood, if not every year, my family spent a stint of time camping at Rolley Lake. During longer stays, my father would even commute to his construction work from the campground. My parents continue to camp there yearly, and members of our family often gather for a campfire or picnic during their stay.

Literature and Theoretical Configurations

The crux of my approach is found in Henri Lefebvre's (1991) argument that "[s]pace appears as a realm of objectivity, yet it exists in a social sense only for activity...In one sense, then, space proposes homologous paths to choose from, while in another sense it invests particular paths with special value" (Lefebvre pg. 191). Examining what paths are proposed in a space and how they

come to seem natural invites other questions. What values are associated with this so-called objective perspective? What other paths are precluded or possible?

Lefebvre argues that cognition and discourse may account for temporal-spatial conditions plausibly enough to substitute their abstract configurations for physical experience (1991). In other words, narratives implicating space may obscure or distort competing knowledge available through the body. Going further, Lefebvre calls attention to how society's "sovereign powers to have at their disposal special places: religious and political sites" (Lefebvre pg. 34), in which meaning can be generated to explain the organization of social relations and spaces (and daily experience of them). Forests are mythologized, interpretive spaces. As managed versions, public-access forests also shape, express, or undermine various symbolism, values, functions, and ontological orientations.

Meaningful shapes and orientations emerge not only through symbolic association, but through common habits of perception. Donna Haraway (1988) points out that the sensory paradigm of vision has come to dominate perception and shape reality, particularly through suggestions of geometry. For example, both Haraway and Lefebvre (1991) observe that visual geometry conceptually divides matter by suggesting distance and boundary, rather than addressing entanglement. Engaging surroundings through geometry thus enables the self to rationalize the external world by imagining an 'objective' sense, or even a total view – the hubris of which Haraway deconstructs in her article "Partial Knowledges." Haraway seeks to "reclaim vision" as a metaphor with the potential to belie binary oppositions, avoid "god tricks" of dominant visual metaphors, and situate perspectives (Haraway pg. 581). Lefebvre (1991), on the other hand, indicates listening as a way to deconstruct spatial assumptions and identify power dynamics in

material arrangements. In familiar forest parks and backwoods corridors, these perspectives can provoke new awareness of infrastructure, activities, functions, boundaries, restrictions, and habits of perception associated with the sites and the means of approaching them.¹⁹ Situated, partial approaches to knowledge accept the rigour of complexity over objective constructions, grappling with ways that spatial grooves, sensorial experience, and minds are deeply entangled.²⁰

Heritage themes also play a role in producing place-based knowledge and are present in the architecture and signage of local forest spaces in Mission. Local programs articulate heritage through literature, imagery, official publicity, and education, and they express spatially through architecture, aesthetics, and cultural sites and monuments. Characterization of heritage also responds to psychological pressures. In building coherent narratives of 'the community', myths and historical narratives can also deliver palatable explanations of political dimensions to those benefitting from or exploited by current arrangements and historical inequality.²¹ Those points of dissonance become thematic fixations, or complexes, in identity narratives. A notable colonial complex is the Manichean dichotomy, described by Franz Fanon (2004) and Abdul JanMohamed (1985), wherein settler mythology obscures violence and oppression by treating colonized people as foils in a redemption narrative. The term comes from the Manichean religious order, which sees all phenomena as elementally good or evil, with these forces existing in an essential struggle.

The Manichean tendency cannot acknowledge the perspective of the other. Through images of colonized people as evil, childish, or wild, cultural supremacy is attributed to the colonizers, who are identified through their 'saving vocation' as representing an essential good by

¹⁹ See Chapter Three

²⁰ See also Sarah Pink (2009)

²¹ For example, see Doreen Massey (1995; 2006), Pierre Nora (1984), and Edward Said (2000) on the role of collective memory and heritage in constructing so-called legitimate place-based identities

bringing the other to their perspective (or vanquishing them). For example, it was only in 2017 that signs celebrating aspects of the residential school were removed from Heritage Park (a former site of St. Mary's Residential School). Similarly, local written settler histories have depicted the early priests' patronage of First Nations peoples as providing positive influence through Christian education and protection (Mission Museum, 2017, "Arrival of the Oblates."), not acknowledging their programmatic approach to replacing non-Christian leadership roles in First Nations Communities in Mission or acknowledging disruption of family structures and matrilineal inheritance (e.g. see Annett, K. 2010, pg. 12).

Constructs that work to legitimize occupation in Canada, including the Manichaeic complex, also interact with nature and wilderness tropes. Literary critique of the 'Canadian wild' by Prisca Augustyn (2013) and critical geography by Bruce Willems-Braun (1997) present thematic development of the 'Canadian wild' as a historically grounded process with ideological functions. Production of 'wild space' was central to the colonial Canadian project. Analysis of the ways dominant tropes have arisen can dispel some of their universal or essential sense, even as they continue to connect with common forms of experience, such as survival, learning, and personalized encounters. Canada's colonial and industrial past implicates current social relations, which continue to be produced through control of resources, labour, and land.²² Tropes of the 'Canadian wild' and 'rugged west' connect to political forces that outline spaces and narratives through which personal and collective meaning is suggested.²³

²² For example, see Coulthard's (2014) critique of reconciliation discourse as obscuring land-based restorative justice; Cornthassel and Bryce's (2012) exposure of Indigenous erasure in land representation; McNally's (1981) critique of Innis's circulatory and market-based staples models, which have "dehumanized" explanations for production of labour in resource development; and Wood's (2002) explanation of labour-based immigration programs as part of a dispossession process enabling concentrated industrialization.

²³ See Chapter Two for ideological construction of the Canadian 'wild'

Emplaced coherence is also produced for an inhabitant through their poetic creations of reality at the formative level, in relation to surroundings and impressions that form architectures of meaning in space and time. Gaston Bachelard (1994) analyzes and explores the presence of poetic forms in structures and environments that entwine experience, especially around shapes of 'home.' Through personal and collective formative experiences, resonances emerge between poetic shapes, states of mind, and modalities. For example, the space of home invites imaginative fantasy, but as my orientation moves from inside to outside the fence, danger is signalled, prompting alertness. The fence itself signals not only the possibility of danger but identifies those who are 'not danger' (Bachelard pg. 30; pg. 22-23). Such explorations of imaginative manifestation and attachment delve into phenomena such as instinctive behaviour (e.g., nesting), bounding the self, and shaping of fear. They affirm the positioning of 'wilderness' as a foil for home, and vice versa. They also illustrate the potential of forest spaces to resonate with ideas of home and to contain both safety and danger.²⁴

Poetic experiences and critical approaches continue to re-ignite each other in my research, paradoxically at times. I have engaged with fantasy, sensation, and memory in and around the sites, but increasingly question their production and context. Michel Foucault's (1984) concept of *heterotopia* resonates with this conundrum and offers a useful means of analysis. Heterotopia are spaces where normal social flows and realities are kept from penetrating an enclosure. The more complete the enclosure, the more effective the heterotopia, and to arrive inside requires some effort, protocol, or 'purification' (pg. 21). In heterotopia, time and routine are defined differently from the world outside.

²⁴ See Chapter Three for discussion of forest spaces and ideas of home

Foucault describes some functions of heterotopia: they have controlled and hidden people and conditions treated as social sickness (such as the seniors' home, hospital, or prison) or have constructed utopic pseudo-microcosms (for example, the monastery, museum, or garden). Temporary heterotopia can be established, and the functions of existing heterotopia can also change according to the needs of the dominant culture (pg. 18). In short, they are spaces designed for inducing fantasy and not only fantasy, but fantasy which seems to neutralize social complexes and aversions (pg. 22). For instance, while conservation parks were being expanded as valuable portals into 'nature' for settler communities in British Columbia during the 19th century, other enclosures—the First Nations Reserves in the Fraser Valley and wider province—had been created to segregate and re-order the dispossessed and were further diminished in size over several decades.²⁵

The nature garden is according to Foucault (1984) an old example of heterotopia, which exemplifies how such spaces layer meanings and bring together "contradictory emplacements" (pg. 19). At once biologically expressive and strategically tended, the garden arranges and curates living growth and natural elements for various contemplation and performances by visitors. In the case of Mission, it also juxtaposes rustic architecture and modern amenities. In fact, Foucault's language around the daydream function of the garden heterotopia echoes Bachelard's (1994) descriptions of daydreaming within the bounded spatial poetics of *home*. Considering forest spaces in terms of heterotopia can illuminate social functions of the spaces within various complexes, including colonial, industrial, and conservationist.

²⁵ See Chapter Two for discussion of land and title management in the region and see Crockford (2010)

Approach to Research-Creation

Asking how I constructed a place-based knowledge over time, out of the materials and experiences at hand, necessarily asks what systems and realities have been obscured or precluded, and to what extent it is possible to observe or even remediate my knowledge. My research relies not only on analysis of discourse, policy, and spatial features, but on playful experiments with situation and perspective. These experiments instigate or imitate modalities to surprise unobserved positions, guiding forms, fixations, and assumptions into manifesting. They help me switch between critical mentalities and poetic automatism. While media-making helped alter my perspectives of place for critical inquiry, at the same time critical inquiry generated copious new artistic expressions.

Several formulations have helped me invest in research-creation practices. Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk's (2015) typology of research-creation helped clarify objectives, especially using creation *as* research, especially while challenges of articulation are particular to the project. Some writings on a/r/tography (e.g. Coleman, 2016) similarly informed my understanding of art-based research practices as refracting knowledge through a self-in-process. Nathalie Loveless's (2014) essays tackling academic territory-marking and failure in research-creation also helped me articulate my focus on processing over production. Likewise, van Wyck's (2010) investigative historiography modeled an approach to 'unknowing' pre-formed spatial realities through a series of reflexive field encounters, re-encountered through creative writing.

My audio practice was modeled by research-practitioners, particularly Hildegard Westerkamp (1996; 2002) and Owen Chapman (2015), who explore situated experience through

listening and compositional engagement.²⁶ The language and terminology for expressing acoustic experience drew heavily from Truax's (1984) *Acoustic Communication*. Finally, working with alternating modalities and materials allowed the emerging configurations to cast lingering forms on each other. This interaction can also be conceived as inducing resonance (Thulin 2012; 2015) or semblance (Powell 2015), which through layering experiences begin to reveal thematic constellations and architectures. By observing, deconstructing, representing, and arranging fragments of understanding through creativity, I engage subterranean processes of world-making. At this intersection, I seize on facets of meaning working poetically and ideologically.

My main creative practices, in tandem with documentary research, have been 1) site visitation, focusing on re-mediating and reclaiming perceptions through field observation (particularly listening) and physical movement in the sites; 2) art-making as a means of activating virtual space (symbolic, memory, transfigured space), by constellating objects and practices; 3) autoethnographic investigation through writing and revisiting past journals. The work took the form of creative writing, soundscape composition, photography, painting, and drawing. A selection of the material appears in dialogue with or as counterpart to the written analysis.²⁷ By playing at world-making in various forms – site visitation, imaginative play, and art-making – I surprised myself with assumptions, recurring tropes, questions, gestures, and shapes to investigate further. Moreover, these exercises both shaped and responded to other facets of the project, such as policy

²⁶ e.g. Westerkamp's 1996 album of soundscape compositions, *Transformations*, and accompanying texts; Chapman's collective listening and composition projects in Falaise St. Jacques (2015) and Morecambe, UK (2016).

²⁷ I present some of my creative practices and samples in more detail in Chapter Four. Chapter Five consists of a soundscape composition and short accompanying text.

and regulatory research, allowing me to observe and reflect on my practice through changing knowledge.²⁸

Conclusion

Forestry spaces, particularly the backwoods sites in Mission, are meaningful to me in ways that seem highly personal—but as my knowledge of their context and spatial production has changes, I increasingly question the assumptions and values naturalized as part of their fabric. These spaces are managed by a variety of authorities, and their surrounding forests are defined, drawn on, and constructed by various projects. Investigating social and political positioning of the Mission backwoods is not only relevant to my personal understanding of rural space and identity, but also relevant to historic and present social relations. Moreover, it is timely with the area about to undergo a multi-million-dollar tourism development project, with participating stakeholders including municipal and provincial governments, the energy utility BC Hydro, the RCMP, commercial developers, the Kwantlen Business Group, and recreational associations) (Stave Lake West Master Plan 2016).

Forestry domain in Mission also intersects with conceptual and political structures founded on historical exclusions that are often obscured by current discourse.²⁹ Moreover, the accepted norms of land management, access, and property also naturalize structural dimensions and convey limits or possibilities of action. Within the taken-for-granted shapes of recreational forest space, idiosyncratic memories and experiences can become nestled and entangled in both personal associations and social configurations. Intersecting my memory and sensory experience with critical

²⁸ See Chapter Four and Five

²⁹ See Chapter Two for discussion and examples

analysis of B.C. forestry policy and settler wilderness tropes can illuminate the managed boundaries of environment-based citizenship, nature affiliation, and local economy. It also, uneasily for me, reveals the slim bases on which poetic knowledge expands into reality-supporting narratives.

Provoking and deconstructing my understanding of 'natural' destinations in my own hometown revealed unchecked assumptions grounding not only my world-building processes but the implicit beliefs underlying regional claims to sovereignty. The exclusion and dispossession that have enabled centralization and concentration of land and resource management are inverted and neutralized by superimposing spatial narratives and functions. By exposing them, settlers and migrants can come closer to imagining new relations with environmental and decolonial justice. At the personal level, it provides me an opportunity to analyse the means and materials of world-making upon which I have relied, and to reconsider how creative practices might disrupt hegemonic forms, allowing other knowledge to inform how I understand my emplacement and participation.

CHAPTER TWO WILD CLAIMS: COLONIAL PRODUCTION OF 'NATURAL' ORDERS AND LAND SOVEREIGNTY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

"To hold, for example, that natural space, the space described by the geographer, existed as such and was then at some point socialized leads either to the ideological posture of nostalgic regret for a space that is no longer, or else to the equally ideological view that this space is of no consequence because it is disappearing. In reality, whenever a society undergoes a transformation, the materials used in the process derive from another, historically (or developmentally) anterior social practice. A purely natural or original state of affairs is nowhere to be found" - Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*)

Introduction

One role of nature in Canadian colonialism has been to prompt and normalize continuous top-down 'ordering' of terrain and its 'contents.' Since its formation as a colony, British Columbia's governors have created and/or delegated power to centralized management bureaus, corporations, commissions, ministries, offices, programs, registries, and so on, to (re)formulate authority and entitlement to specific lands and resources on behalf of the Crown.³⁰ This express relation has remained intact throughout different configurations of nature and resource access over time, producing policy and processes that promote or hinder different spatial agendas and occupations.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how some of the same constructions of Canadian wilderness that underlay my formative play in forestry space³¹ were also used to legitimize and obscure disruptions in land and range tenure. I connect wilderness tropes in colonial literature and

³⁰ See Bibliography, e.g.: BC Geographic Names Office; Government of BC, "Forest Stewardship"; Government of BC "Forests for Tomorrow Program"; land-related ministries indexed at B.C. Government Directory; administrative programs listed in the Ministry of Forests 'Featured Topics' list; see McLaren et al (2011) for historical examples; see Hak (2006) for a history of Forest and Range acts and regulatory developments

³¹ See also Chapter Four

governance to bluntly oppressive policy oriented around containment of people and extraction of assets. These tropes bolster a natural ontology that continues to claim geographical and cultural supremacy, reproducing jurisdictional space—even as reconciliation and resource enfranchisement discourses problematize the foundation of those claims.

As early practices of jurisdictional articulation, zoning and cartographic representation perpetuated symbolic associations with Crown range land by delineating wild, interpretive, and productive zones. The tropes of literature have also thickened and emplaced these zones through mythological architectures of the wild. In the case of BC land administration, Shiri Pasternak (2014) describes *jurisdiction* as “a conceptual framework for understanding the specificities of settler colonialism” and how it relates to the Canadian form of colonialism based on “land acquisition and population *replacement*” (Pasternak pg. 147). Conceptually and physically removing First Nations inhabitants from occupation and management of the Sto:Lo region, where Mission is situated, cleared specific areas for new forms of settlement and industry, while banishing imagery of largescale non-colonial resource management systems. At the same time, First Nations people were forbidden from benefitting from colonial land ownership schemes in British Columbia.³²

In the case of Mission, zoning practices were particularly significant to cultural, geographic, and economic nexus of First Nations and white settlers. The First Nations reserve acreage in Mission and surrounding areas was first inscribed by Governor James Douglas as wider displacements were occurring in the province. It was whittled down by subsequent re-bounding between 1858 and 1870, at times at the direct request of white settlers who wanted the

³² The Land Ordinance was adjusted to exclude First Nations homesteading by request of Colonel Moody (Moss and Gardner-O’Toole, 1991, referencing *An Ordinance to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Affecting Crown Lands in British Columbia*, S.B.C. 1870, c. 18).

government to intervene in land allocation on their behalf.³³ The dramatic, region-wide reversal in land-holding proportions of settlers and First Nations people was soon scrubbed from local history, and a pioneering effort was construed in the setting of hostile wilderness.³⁴ Willems-Braun (1996) refers to this as “an absent presence (the production of colonial space) that structures both economic relations in BC and the theories deployed to explain them” (Willems-Braun pg. 17).

Nature in the First Place: Characterizing ‘Natural’ Space and its ‘Contents’

As Canada came to be administrated as a British colony through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, claims to the land were rooted in a transplanting of British common law to the colonies in preference to existing regional frameworks of occupation and tenure.³⁵ From the earliest efforts of the colonial government to survey the continent, visual representations of landscapes have suggested categories underpinning property creation and boundary marking. This assumption of sovereign rights was fundamentally tied to other assumptions about nature and *rightful* hierarchies of order. In other words, a pre-formed legal basis was imposed on the ‘new territory’, while a moral basis also entitled the ‘rightful’ governance of land (and its inhabitants). Rather than assess the validity or aptness of these traditions, Bruce Willems-Braun (1996) follows Spivak in investigating how through their construction of nature and culture in colonial land, they “buried epistemologies” that structured Indigenous society and land relations.

³³ For example, Crockford (2010, pg. 34-35) quotes from letters in which Fraser region settlers complained about the size of First Nations reserve lands and asked to claim improved parcels. See also Crockford (pg. 39) for local news at the time reporting the extensiveness of the First Nations parcel as an injustice that was impacting settlers

³⁴For example, see ‘Destination BC’ (the BC Government tourism corporation) explanation of Mission historical development (“Mission Culture and History”) and District of Mission (2017), “About Us: History” <https://www.mission.ca/about/> for examples of accounts of hydro-electric operations that omit supplanted uses of the same space

³⁵ For example, see Pasternak (2014) pg. 148; Willems-Braun (1996) pg. 9

Early cartography abstracted geographical territory into functional categories based on the surveyor's encounters and observations. These abstractions corresponded with British common-law and intellectual traditions (Pasternak, 2014, pg. 152), including a set of cultural relations to 'forces of nature.' First, 'nature' was constructed as a special place and quality distinct from civilization (Willems-Braun, 1996, pg. 7, 9, 10; Ljungberg, 2001, pg. 172). The idea of land as divisible property was not only transferred from British systems of rights and evidence but manufactured through representations of 'unoccupied' nature in colonial cartography and travel writing. As Doreen Massey (1995) expressed, the "boundaries and the naming of space-time within them are the reflections of power and their existence has effects" (Massey pg. 189). With systems imposed upon it, this 'unoccupied' territory could begin to provide contiguous forms of value for settler-claimants. The spaces of living, working, and recreating that they engendered have depended on dispossession of First Nations people and other material arrangements to produce space.

Cartographic representations, for example, laid conceptual groundwork for colonial occupation by significantly divorcing pre-existing cultural and ecological practices of Indigenous residents from their holistic contexts (Willems-Braun, 1996, pg. 7). Early maps focused on bounding areas of occupation, such as villages, and represented these as static (Willems-Braun pg. 12). The cultural activity in other words was restricted to zones of inhabitation; practices spanning forest space and seasonal time were flattened or erased from view.

At other times, those routes and the activities along them were not even observed or recognized. McLaren et al (2011) point out that Indigenous territory in the Fraser area, mapped in terms of land use, was reduced further by cartographers unable to recognize paths and travel routes. The Fort Langley Journals, an early 18th century account of an expedition through the Fraser

region, observes that “settlement activity sites” recorded on maps prior to the 1860s tended to be those in view from the travel routes of settlers, such as shoreline campsites seen from the river (McLaren et al, 2011, pg. 8).

Indigenous people, located ‘outside the fence’ of European settlement, were categorized by virtue of that location among the wild elements in Canadian, US, and European literature spanning the 18th to 20th centuries, and were dehumanized in cautionary tales and adventure stories.³⁶ Bachelard (1994) describes the fence/wall as an archetypal structure, the creation of which represented not only safety from the wild, but the possibility of *home* and the bounding of identity (Bachelard, 1994, pg. 5, 7, 27). Enclosures express a fundamental separation from ‘the wild’ that establishes not only survival but safety for personalization. This parsing of personhood in terms of the fence is at odds with an “Indigenous ‘pansemiotic’ [that holds] almost no categorical boundary between culture and nature,” and which colonial governments interpreted as a lack of will to progress when they first encountered its cultural expressions (Ljungberg, 2001, pg. 174; Harris, 1997, pg. 75). In short, colonial schema operationalized nature as a non-cultural space, defined as a primordial ‘wild’ in need of ordering.³⁷

To the contrary of ‘untouched land’ narratives, First Nations peoples had managed land and resources using techniques going back centuries and longer. Bryce (in Corntassel, 2012) articulated how the overflowing abundance described by Captain Vancouver “was only there by virtue of a lot of hard work by her female ancestors who owned and managed the camas fields

³⁶e.g. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Susanna Moodie, Jack London, Suzanne Martel, Alexander MacKenzie

³⁷ For example, see Herman Melville’s (1948) *the Confidence Man* and the judge’s monologue on the “the metaphysics of Indian hating” which expresses the literary and physical function of a ‘righteous settler’ as vanguard for institutional colonialism.

through seasonal burning, weeding and harvesting on a sustainable scale. The only reason they [the company] settled here was that we had done such a good job of keeping the soil rich" (Corntassel pg. 157). Provision, in other words, was often built upon an illusion of wilderness and cultural emptiness, or the 'one look' of settlement (Corntassel pg. 157), which defined legitimate rights.

NATURE AS CHAOS AND DANGER: THE CALL FOR ORDER

If 'nature' was constructed as a 'raw stuff' located outside (or void of) culture, what qualities did it seem to possess? Central tropes of a 'dangerous wild' and a 'chaotic other' can be traced throughout Canadian literature, art, and architecture, beginning with early colonial travel writings, maps, exhibits, and historical accounts. While romantic and preservationist attitudes towards nature interacted with these images later, representations in the early period of Canadian colonialism were more concerned with hardship and the vast unknown as obstacles to survival, security, and wealth.³⁸ They were particularly fixated on the exertion of civilization against un-civilized domains, as Elsa Lam (2008) demonstrates in a study of Canadian-Victorian architecture and imagery exchange in British venues. The imagery "offered a sharp contrast between wilderness resources and signs of civilization," and the aesthetic juxtaposition of hardship and comfort became an expression of a "proto-nationalist project" (Lam pg. 13) that also established an inside community.

Like the civility it posed in response to the 'rowdy middle ages', Victorian culture imposed a strong impression in North America. In medieval symbolism, the forest "represents chaos, the anti-world, unstructured chthonic space, inhabited by monsters, infernal powers or people associated with them" (Augustyn, 2013, pg. 496). Christina Ljungberg (2001) describes how pre-dating the

Victorian era, the Christian intellectual tradition during early colonial times in Canada invoked divine right of Christian nations to order the 'disordered' lands they encountered as a form of duty. For example, the explorer Jacques Cartier claimed that Canada was "the land God gave Cain" (Lundberg pg. 170), describing both its punishing hostility and the divine origin of claims. The priests and early governors saw a chaos that required ordering into the Christian system. Of course, the biblical history of human relations with the world is one based on authority to govern and name. Similarly, the Crown's reserved right to name and identify land and geographical features is asserted in government literature, both in territory-establishing documents and in current government publications.³⁹

The 'Christian obligation' to command unruly nature extended from God and rulers (governors) to the settlers themselves. Improving a British Columbia Crown land by developing it was rewarded with the option of at-cost acquisition (although some speculators were able to get the same deal without improvements).⁴⁰ However, First Nations people, along with Chinese citizens, were banned from pre-empting land and could not gain title to Crown parcels at cost through the act of homesteading. This ban came about through a law was passed in 1870 after a First Nations person attempted to participate in a Crown land auction in the nearby city of New Westminster, formerly the provincial capital.

³⁹ According to the Crown Land Registry, "The minister is responsible for and may undertake, commission, coordinate and set standards for base mapping and land related information systems in British Columbia and for related remote sensing and survey control functions"

⁴⁰ For example, William Cromerty not only established his homestead on land where a First Nation family had already built a home and garden, but he optioned the land before doing any of the stipulated improvements (McLaren et al, 2011, pg. 13)

'Civilizing' policies of the nineteenth century also related a Manichean role to racialized gender, narrativizing exclusion through Christian imagery in which women embodied spiritual conditions (Fanon, 2004; JanMohamed, 1985). While undermining First Nations women for inadequate performance of femininity, British public administrators proposed that "white women were essential to the 'civilizing' project" and their presence alone would induce calm and piety, produce stable families, keep rustic male behaviour in line, and serve as model femininity for First Nations women (Perry, 2000, pg. 69 and Carter, 2005). At the same time, this assessment of character was linked to material wealth, as First Nations women in British Columbia were barred from intestate inheritances unless their moral character had been determined by the governor or representative (Moss & Gardner-O'Toole, 1987).⁴¹ Similarly, early land allocation in 1860 was based on the number of men "considered to be the head of a family" (McLaren et al, 2011, pg. 59-60), although many nations, such as the Musqueam are matrilineal.

Literary worlds also gravitated around imagery of homesteading in wilderness as a project of civilization. While Canadian literature was dominated by pioneer encounters with brutal nature, this motif was paired with certain "power of Victorian civilization against wilderness" (Lam, 2008, pg. 12) This 'civilizing force' was expressed for example in travel writing of Canadian pioneers such as Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill, among others (Lam, 2008, pg. 12). The forest continues to be characterized in literature and discourse as a place of disorder and risk where "drugs are dealt and bodies dumped" (Augustyn, 2013, pg. 496). In Mission, drugs and bodies have both been dumped in the woods, as well as household and industrial waste, bullet casings, and

⁴¹ *An Act to Further Amend the Indian Act, 1880, S.C. 1884, c. 27, s. 5.* Cited in Moss & Gardner-O'Toole (1987): Government of Canada.

enough beer cans to fill a barge. Characteristics of forestry spaces— isolation, thick tree cover, utility road access, and cultural associations to dark deeds—also produce a space for those activities. Such negative behaviour, referred to as ‘rowdiness,’ often prompts official plans for further oversight and control of backwoods access.

Stave Canyon and Resource Heritage

In Mission, the Stave Canyon provides an example of the ‘untouched land’ narrative and illustrates historic use of zoning as a form of domination. While I was growing up in the town, I was familiar with the local industrial resource heritage through public education and historical promotion, which especially focused on the hydroelectric reservoir system in the Stave Canyon, whose facilities were completed in 1912⁴². However, I was not aware that a large-scale Indigenous fishery (including operations for processing and preserving) had occupied the Stave Canyon watershed at the time of settlement, that Kwantlen elders still use the area for fishing within the new constraints of the damming system, or that their broader industry had been disrupted to make way for hydroelectric industries.⁴³ Electricity harvesting is portrayed as the original ‘local progress’ in Mission, if not a close second to the railroad station.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the scale of the fisheries is reduced through frequent references to First Nations “traditional activities” such as “hunting and fishing,” terms that do not convey the degree of organization involved.⁴⁵ There were also

⁴² For example, via BC Hydro: “These three hydroelectric developments were instrumental in shaping the history and landscape of the Stave Valley. This power helped drive growth in the Lower Mainland from as early as 1909 when the construction of the Stave Falls Dam began” (BC Hydro “Take a Closer Look at Hayward Lake”)

⁴³ It was only in reading a formal complaint against the Crown hydro corporation that I learned about oral testimony and land records on this subject

⁴⁴ For example, see Bibliography: Mission Museum, BC Hydro Recreation information

⁴⁵ For example, see Destination BC (the BC Government tourism corporation), “Mission Culture and History.” See also Mission Museum “Stó:Lō: People of the River.”

organized systems for “gathering forest and mineral resources” and “trading throughout the watershed” (Evidence of Tumia Knott, 2011, pg. 2).

By designating a space’s productive function, the Crown also disenfranchised First Nations communities and empowered others. Despite explicit requests for logging licenses, First Nations reserves in the Stave Lake area were zoned instead for agriculture, even when farming could not support the designated inhabitants. For example, a village site was designated in the swampy, rocky areas of Whonock Reserve (now in the Mission catchment area) in 1874, even though the surveyor reported that “there was insufficient cultivatable land to enable him to subdivide the remainder into allotments” (McLaren et al, 2011, pg. 79).

First Nations people’s organized interactions with ecology and geology were not only rendered invisible in official accounts, at times the longer Indigenous history—or the land itself—has been conflated with settler systems. For example, the 2012 BC Jobs Plan emphasized that “Our forests have built and sustained British Columbia’s families and rural communities,” that “the forest sector has long been a cornerstone of the provincial economy,” and that forests “have provided resources for communities for thousands of years” (“Our Natural Advantage,” 2012, pg. 3). The diction here explicitly locates the community as outside—but drawing on—the forest. Beyond the claim that forests sustain life, the idea that “*our* forests” [emphasis added] have supported communities for “thousands of years” conflates the current settler community with previous Indigenous communities and suggests a continuity in their relations to nature and to each other without hint of any violent disruption, replacement, and exclusion.

Access and by Management Science

Under Crown licensing, largescale operations contributed to infrastructure development, such as mill-building and road-making, in exchange for premium access to timber land (Hak, 2006, pg. 43, 44). The reserves of timber-rich land that Commissioner Douglas had allocated to the Kwantlen people, on the other hand, had disappeared from the map by the time of the 1871 update to the federal registry (Crockford, 2010, pg. 388). Denied logging permission, First Nations workers were, however, able to sell their labour to logging operations during the agricultural off-season. Japanese Canadians, similarly, were not legally entitled to apply for logging licenses in British Columbia until after 1948, although they were also invited to provide cheap labour to other licensed operations (Canadian Encyclopedia, "Japanese Canadians").

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the structures around forestry access became increasingly articulated (Hak, 2006, pg. 44). The idea of 'sustainable yield' had been taking hold as part of the conservation movement in North America since about 1880, and by 1930, it became part of the discussion in British Columbia (Hak, 2006, pg. 47). BC implemented a conservation-based Land Act in 1947, following a commission in 1943. Conservancy, a response to visible over-use of resources, positioned nature as a source of not only provision but profit, which could be maximized through progress in science. Along with long-term sustainability of timber stock, maximization was considered an inherent good. The "maximum sustained yield" formulation disposed the government to grant first access to larger corporations, who were presented to the public as generators of the economy. This also positioned access as a commodity.⁴⁶ While small

⁴⁶ The logic of over-use was also used to enclose fishery resources, whose management had also been criticized for allowing 'ad hoc' access by small operations, which threatened the fishing stock. Later, access beginning in the 1980s was limited to larger operations who were able to trade ITQs (individual transfer quotas) of their maximum allowable catch as a commodity (Pinkerton and Davis, 2015).

operators were encouraged to participate, access was prioritized so that “each use was managed for the highest value” (Hak pg. 47).

Assigning a range of land as dedicated productive space put value on continuous yields but not necessarily on ecology.⁴⁷ As one British Columbian conservationist put it back in 1941, forestry management is “not based primarily on sentiment nor upon the desire to preserve the trees for their beauty, but that the entire forestry business is conducted on sound economic principles” (Hak, 2006, pg. 49). In 1945, the Sloan Commission recommended what is now known as the Tree Farm Licence (TFL) system (originally called Forest Management Licence). Companies would compete for managed access to logging land in exchange for tolerating new forest management regulations (Hak, 2006, pg. 42). In 1979, the Forest Act was amended to add an Annual Allowable Cut, which sets for each year “the maximum that a logging company can log, but also says that the logging company is **required** to log close to that amount...” (Lanteigne & Morton, 2013, web).

The narrative of management science as an expert authority, with maximum sustainable yield as the ideal, has been used to legitimize drastic ecological and cultural disruption. The British Columbia government’s public facing forestry documents have reasserted the Crown’s right “to determine where, when and how forest resources can be used for the best long-term benefit of its citizens” (“Our Natural Advantage,” 2012, pg. 3). Other examples of the top status of management science in resource development planning can be seen in mega-dam projects, such as the James Bay project in northern Quebec or Site C in British Columbia, where massive ecosystems and

⁴⁷ For that reason, it was conceivable for conservation-minded forest managers to endorse eradicating old growth forests in order to better control the entire growth cycle (Hak, 2006, pg.45)

communities have been displaced for what is presented as not only a business development but a social good or even a necessity (i.e., the provision of energy), despite strong public and First Nations opposition.⁴⁸

Similarly, BC Hydro upgrades to the Ruskin Dam in Mission during the early 2000s were presented to both the provincial government and the local Kwantlen community as a “foregone option,” even though it was later revealed that decommissioning the dam had been a possibility not presented for consultation. Decommissioning also happened to be the desire of Kwantlen people who still used remaining access to the canyon for fishing. During the commission, called to investigate the dam upgrades after Kwantlen leadership formally complained about BC Hydro’s consultation behaviour, it was also revealed that BC Hydro had forced the excavation of an embedded archaeological site in order to build an “essential” flood wall that it later decided not to build (Tumia Knott, 2011, pg. 8 and 9). Subsequently, despite provincial directives for consultation at the level of resource program planning, BC Hydro released a ‘First Nations Relations’ statement that explicitly affirmed it would not consult until after the program design level, nor address what it called “past grievances.”⁴⁹

In 2012, a government report on forest economy stated: “B.C. is in the enviable position of owning 94 per cent of its land base and the forest resources on these lands” (“Our Natural Advantage,” 2012, pg. 3). From the beginning, the British Columbia government kept ownership of timber stock. Even when significant claims have been later won, such as the Nisga’a’s landmark

⁴⁸ e.g. see Smith (2017); Hunter & Bailey (2017); Times Colonist (2017) “BC Premiere Says”; Canadian Encyclopedia, “James Bay”

⁴⁹ See BC Hydro, “Indigenous Relations” and BC Hydro, “Statement of Indigenous Principles” (2017).

2000 victory for autonomous government and land settlement, the Crown still uttered its own supremacy through permanent land entailment at the sovereign level. On its current Natural Resources Stewardship page, in the section on "Consulting With First Nations," the text indicates that consultation is a legal right granted by the state:

"The Province is legally obligated to consult and accommodate First Nations, where required, on land and resource decisions that could impact their Indigenous Interests."

As Glen Coulthard (2014) makes the case, throughout moves towards federal and provincial recognition and reconciliation in discursive forms, the colonial government paradoxically denies and asserts its own strategic positioning of sovereignty through land-based exclusion.⁵⁰

Capital barriers also produced exclusions. As forestry management in BC turned towards large-scale operations, and as outfits with more capital installed steam-powered rail connections (or railway companies themselves installed the infrastructure in exchange for land monopolies), small owner-operators often struggled to keep up access and profit margins. The stumpage and royalty fees were prohibitive, and during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the industry saw a shift in labour from independents (loggers who cut and sold timber in small batches) to contract labourers for centralized logging firms. In Mission there were nine independent loggers before the war, but only mill contractors after the 1940s (Mission Department of Forest, "Timeline"). As larger firms consolidated control of the exploration, harvesting, and production chain, they compartmentalized the labour flow. While truck loggers had once handled clearing roads, logging, and selling lumber across rangeland, large companies now pieced out the

⁵⁰ See Coulthard, G. (2014). *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*.

work, hiring one contractor to clear stumps, one to build roads, one to log, another to transport, and so on (Hak, 2006, pg. 58, 61).

At the district level in Mission, councillors and local industry strategized to adapt to licensing structures through self-organized forestry development. In the early 1940s, the district requested land in reserves or by lease from the Crown, which at first refused the request. Mission created its own municipal reserves of about 1076 hectares in 1945 using what it describes as land forfeited due to failure to pay tax. In 1958, the Crown reserve was approved, and the municipality registered the 10,500-hectare forestry operation as Tree Farm Lot 26 (or TFL 26), also known as Mission Municipal Forest (Department of Forestry, "Mission Municipal Forest"). The district came to view logging practice, and later tourism, as a way to retain a local stake in the surrounding Crown land, in the context of large-scale provincial land licensing.⁵¹

In the early 2000s, the provincial government focused on allocating tree farm licenses and promoting forestry employment in First Nations communities. Five annual provincial revenue sharing payments of \$86, 713 were made to the Kwantlen for use of their coastal forest territory. Subsequent consultancy reports on First Nations logging found that most of the licenses tended to be 'non-replaceable' (short-term harvesting work) rather than 'replaceable' (ongoing licenses that allow the licensee to plan long-term forestry programs). Emphasis has been on economic productivity, bench-marking maximum yield, and employment numbers. However, consultations

⁵¹ Both the Mission Municipal Forestry Department 2016 reporting and the Stave Lake West Master Plan (2016) reference this rationale.

and reports on the program have revealed material barriers (investment capital and skills training) to economic participation, as well as competing interest in non-extractive uses for forestry space.⁵²

Logging, milling, and transport continue to employ a small number of residents of Mission, although other trade and service sectors now provide the majority of local jobs. Over the years, Mission's logging operations have funded some local infrastructure projects, such as library upgrades, although at other points they have been revenue neutral or negative (Mission Forestry Department, "Annual Report 2016"). The Municipal Hall Forestry Site explains that beyond economics, benefits of the municipal forestry license include "control of the local forest resources, and providing forest recreation and educational opportunities" (Mission Municipal Hall, "Forest History"). In the context of the Stave West Plan (a multi-stakeholder Crown land development currently underway in the backwoods), which includes proposed changes to increase oversight of Crown land use, Council reports that beyond local revenue, continued access and input into adjacent resources are priorities of municipal forest management.⁵³ In other words, Mission has positioned its access through both productive and managerial functions.

⁵² For examples, see pg. 4 of "Non-replaceable Forest License Management: Understanding the Basics" (2005) for an explanation of the constraints of each license type and the implications of their award. In 2010 the First Nations Woodlot program was launched, and before that, according to BC Government stewardship literature, "short term, non-exclusive right to harvest timber...characterized licences awarded to First Nations" ("Summary of Forest Initiatives"). Also, "Sharing the Wealth" (2010) identified other industry-end obstacles to First Nations development of forestry programs, including industry hostility and lack of priority. The First Nations Forestry Council also commissioned a consultant's report on First Nations forestry, which also found First Nations operations did not capitalize or attain long-term tenures to the same degree as other businesses, for reasons that included administrative obstacles in licensing, lack of skills training, and diverse forestry priorities among First Nations practitioners (SR Management Services, 2010).

⁵³ See Stave West Master Plan (2016) and Mission Municipal Forest Report (2016)

Preservation and Romantic Nature Ecology in Rightful Use

Recreational nature spaces in British Columbia similarly fit into a larger pattern of conceptual geography and occupational practices surrounding forest and land management. As Canadian interests caught up with nature appreciation spreading through literature and storytelling in the US and Europe,⁵⁴ preservation and public enjoyment became new mandates for public forest management. After the period of industrial modernization culminating in World War II, new interest and appreciation for nature arose in Canadian society. As nature appreciation and preservation movements developed in the mid-twentieth century, they also began to shift forestry values and policy. The preservationist perspective viewed natural elements not as a 'chaotic other' but as 'threatened nature' that required appropriate protection and stewardship (Ljungberg, 2001, pg. 176, 177). This attitude shift was connected not only to conservation, but to a romantic sensibility. Rather than the medieval 'anti-home,' this sense of spiritual affinity invoked the German romantic tradition of wondrous encounters with natural 'others' (Augustyn pg. 491). As natural science tried to produce "facts of nature" that separated human culture from 'untouched' nature, preservationists likewise conceived of nature as a 'pure' space 'untouched' by the spread of industrial technology (Augustyn pg. 493, 495) but connecting living creatures.

Ecological preservation also provided another dimension for centralized authority over resource management and zoning, as public enjoyment of nature became a factor in forestry planning. Preservation zones often overlap with areas designated for nature-based recreation and tourism (BC Parks, "Management Procedures"). These sites provide physical and imaginative grounds for public interaction with geological features, ecology, and resource heritage. Beyond

⁵⁴e.g. Romantic nature writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and conservationists such as John Muir. For discussion of conservation-related storytelling in Alaska, see pg. 2525-6 in Roburn, S. (2017).

resource sustainability and biodiversity, park values demand the protection or production of thematic elements that incite visitors' interest/appreciation and/or provide a setting for play and fantasy. BC Parks explains that most parks in their system "are lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments *for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public*" [emphasis added] (BC Parks, "Summary").

Tourist recreation in forestry space is linked to practices of "ecological interpretation" and place-based engagement with the biosphere. The rhetoric of interpretation and engagement is prevalent in government, corporate, and environmentalist literature about the sites in Mission and current backwoods recreation development proposals in BC more broadly.⁵⁵ These sites, as Willems-Braun (1996) pointed out, are presented as being set apart from contemporary processes of change and life, and available for appreciation (and consumption) in close to their 'natural' state. However, more than 'preservations,' the forest park settings where recreation and tourism take place are also managed constructions. The construction of park facilities demanded physical labour, much of which was fronted by industrial penetration as well as provided through a widespread work program employing workers in park infrastructure building during the Great Depression (BC Parks, "A History of BC Parks").

Offering the desirable experience of 'wild encounter' creates management concerns over balancing comfort, safety, and convenience with a wild aura (for instance, providing parking or unobtrusively offering plumbing and WiFi in provincial campgrounds and avoiding unwanted

⁵⁵For example, the Mission Council commissioned a report on feasibility for recreation development in the backwoods that promotes public engagement with ecology as a desired outcome ("Lees and Associates," 2009). See also BC Parks "Mission and Mandate" and BC Parks "Healthy by Nature Conference."

wildlife encounters or encouraging desirable ones). For example, the Rolley Lake tourist brochure describes the site as “less than an hour’s drive from Vancouver” but simultaneously a “wilderness area blanketed with tall, second-growth conifers,” situated to provide “a quick escape from urban life.” The term ‘wilderness’ is used in the same breath as “second-growth.” (BC Parks, “Rolley Lake Provincial Park”). In other words, definitions of wilderness may slip in order to characterize the site as a certain type of zone for public consumption and appreciation.

Interpretation and Visual Asset

Provincial planning documents indicate some of the interventions involved in landscape shaping. For example, an eutrophic swamp at one end of the lake, described as “probably of highest interpretive value in the park” (McNab, undated, pg. 13), is protected from development by zone restrictions, excepting a boardwalk that was constructed as a site enhancement. One beach and swimming area was constructed previously and recent plans for the lake mandate replacing another muck shoreline with a sandy shore. The areas in question overlap, but are treated differently due to zoning (one section of the lakeside is a ‘development zone,’ the other slated for ‘preservation’). This example well illustrates the compartmentalization of nature sites according to not only preservation but interpretive functions and the promotion of specimen appreciation.

In other cases, site development to protect or enhance “visual assets” constructs nature that conforms to preservationist imagery even when the asset itself is the scenic illusion of wild beauty. For example, Rolley Lake’s planning document (McNab, “A Plan for Rolley Lake”), which provides protocol for development, emphasizes the clearing and trimming of trees in the picnic area to frame but not obstruct the view of the lake, and recommends the planting of “native shrubs” to thicken the natural feel of the site. The District of Mission mandates a minimum tree coverage

along roadways to buffer industrial and commercial operations and restricts clear-cut activity in part to maintain the continuous visual atmosphere of the forest from recreational viewing points.⁵⁶

In recently imposed colonial settlements, a sense of “time immemorial” may be suggested in the presentation of heritage and association of the town’s identity with natural and geological formations around the settlement. At local forest sites, Mission’s rugged identity is also rooted in infrastructures that are memorialized as milestones of the town’s progress. For example, signage and written publicity note the decommissioned corduroy road whose fragments still link the backwoods sites. My friends and I would search with archaeological curiosity for traces of it whenever we were out hiking. The former Stave Falls Power House is now an interactive museum run by BC Hydro (in partial compensation for the archaeological devastation caused by the corporation, the Kwantlen Nation has formally asked BC Hydro to also facilitate preservation and display of Indigenous artefacts). Trails around Hayward Lake (in which area 13 Kwantlen archeological sites have been identified) lead to preserved train trestles and plaques about resource history (BC Hydro, “Reservoir Trail” and “Railway Trail”; BC Hydro and Power Authority, 2011, “Information Request 1 to Kwantlen First Nation”, pg. 2).

Contemporary recreation sites also convey historical extraction projects as the ‘first opening’ of public nature contact. Since now these sites are thick with foliage, the suggestion is that the past presence of industry in part allows (or at least does not prevent) ecological thriving. Willems-Braun (1996) expresses how ecological space, through its abundance, “produces nature in the mirror image of capitalist production” (Willems-Braun pg. 9). In other words, forest recreation

⁵⁶See District of Mission Zoning By-Laws (2009-2017) and District of Mission Official Community Plan 2017, pg. 28

destinations are worlds opened for the public by—and conceptually linked to—industrial activity, while also maintaining a status defined in contrast to it.

Conclusion

A critical consideration of space expects to find political forces and ideological assumptions that have been accepted as knowledge and practice. Embodiment of modes of production tend to organize “at best...projects of technological utopianism” and more likely, “projects of power” (Lefebvre, 1991, pg.7). As Ellen Meiksins Wood (2002) argues, the aggregation of capital in North America has depended on producing an available body of land and body of labour through dispossession of Indigenous people and immigrants with no capital, but with work-power as a defining asset. In short, official access and allocation authority rested on widespread, racial, cultural, and economic exclusion. A significant role of nature for rural settler communities was to provide grounds for reimagining local history and identity through a natural hierarchical ontology and Manichean pioneering mythology of ‘order against chaos’ that obscured conflict, land theft, and economic inequality.

Chapter Three Wrapped in Time and Space: Heterotopic Setting for Settlement Performance (photo-essay)

It is not the work of a moment for a society to generate (produce) an appropriated social space in which it can achieve a form by means of self-presentation and self-representation - Henri Lefebvre, *the Production of Space*

Introduction

Swirling together, I have larger-than-life memories of fearful and wonderful shapes and sounds that connect to the forest and its shady paths, lined with moss and bursting with fungi. Forest and nature tropes populate Canadian literature and mythology, creating a persona of the land. As I imagined it growing up, the persona of Mission, British Columbia seemed like a scrappy small town whose challenges were offset by a nourishing natural environment. Here, hard work would pay off, if only after a struggle, but laziness (or weakness) surely led to homelessness and drugs. The community relied on forests and waterways, but as should be expected, there were people who abused the scenic purity of remote areas by dumping garbage or starting fires. Without expressing it in so many words at the time, I understood forest space as generating natural goodness, and human activity as corrupting it—and officials as mitigating and managing.

This chapter analyses the thematic and material environments of two forestry sites in Mission, British Columbia, and the types of experiences they promote. Using multimodal methods, I trace interplay between landscape-associated cognitive architectures in myself and spatial expressions of regional imagery, mythology, and history in managed forest parks. Physical features of forestry recreation sites allow them to function as 'natural' heterotopia (Foucault 1984). In formally responding to the early settlement frontier, nature parks fix attention to a past relation between pioneers and the land in which modern achievements and comforts have not yet arrived. Notably, forest parks provide residents with opportunities to perform a mythic settler narrative

cycle, where 'wilderness' is faced and order is established—while within and reinforcing a sanctioned zone of 'nature'. Enactment and embodiment of this cycle through outdoor activity sites reinforce tropes that in turn rationalize and propose relations of citizenship and authority as they relate to land-based resources.

Field Sites and Situation

Mission is part of the Coastal Forestry Region and the Chilliwack Natural Resource District, the "most densely populated Forest District in the province" (Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations, web). Near several urban populations, the forests are not only considered 'Working Forests' but often 'Interpretive Forests,' as Mission Municipal Forest was classified in 2012 (District of Mission, "The Mission Interpretive Forest," 2012 and "Stave West Master Plan," 2016). Nature appreciation sites throughout the region are sculpted and designed with ecological agendas in mind, as well as recreation potential, amenities, safety, and visual assets.



The author at Hoover Lake in 2010

One of the social values that has been taken up in nature planning discourse in British Columbia since the rise of preservationism in the early nineteenth century (and earlier in other places, like Germany and the United States⁵⁷) is the general benefit of ecological diversity for human wellness. Therapeutic interaction with healthy ecological sites has become tied to health of family and community, framed as “getting out in nature” and “communing.”⁵⁸ Access to biophilic environments has been connected to local wellness and tourism pull-factors, and as such it has become a prominent part of land management discourse and policy at municipal, regional, and provincial levels. In Mission, too, the discourse of community wellness and interpretive ecology has become a significant part of official planning values.

Publicly accessible nature parks in BC have offered visitors and residents relaxing or exciting recreational experiences in nature for more than fifty years. Their form and situation, like many nature recreation sites, are linked to industrial operations that laid groundwork for public recreation on Crown land.⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ These symbolically powerful ecological and aesthetic settings are associated with logging, quarrying, and hydroelectric operations. These projects penetrate what is characterized as “the wild,” allowing nearby space to become purposed through zoning for conservation or preservation (concerned with reclamation for reuse/and protection from

⁵⁷ See Chapter Two, Ljungberg (2001), and Hak (2006)

⁵⁸ See BC Parks, “Mission and Mandate” and BC Parks, “Healthy by Nature Conference.”

⁵⁹ For example, via BC Hydro: “These three hydroelectric developments were instrumental in shaping the history and landscape of the Stave Valley. This power helped drive growth in the Lower Mainland from as early as 1909 when the construction of the Stave Falls Dam began” (BC Hydro “Take a Closer Look at Hayward Lake”)

⁶⁰ For example, Rolley Lake was first used as a holding pond for a shingle bolts and later, a Japanese hand-logging operation starting in the 1930s. After Japanese-Canadian internment, Rolley became used as park space, and was eventually zoned for conservation and recreation (BC Parks, “Rolley Lake Provincial Park”). Similarly, Hayward Lake was constructed for public recreation along the corridor of BC Hydro hydroelectric projects of which it is part.

interference, respectively); interpretation (concerned with “nature and heritage”); and recreation (facilitating outdoor activities and scenic views). Usually parks combine elements of all three.



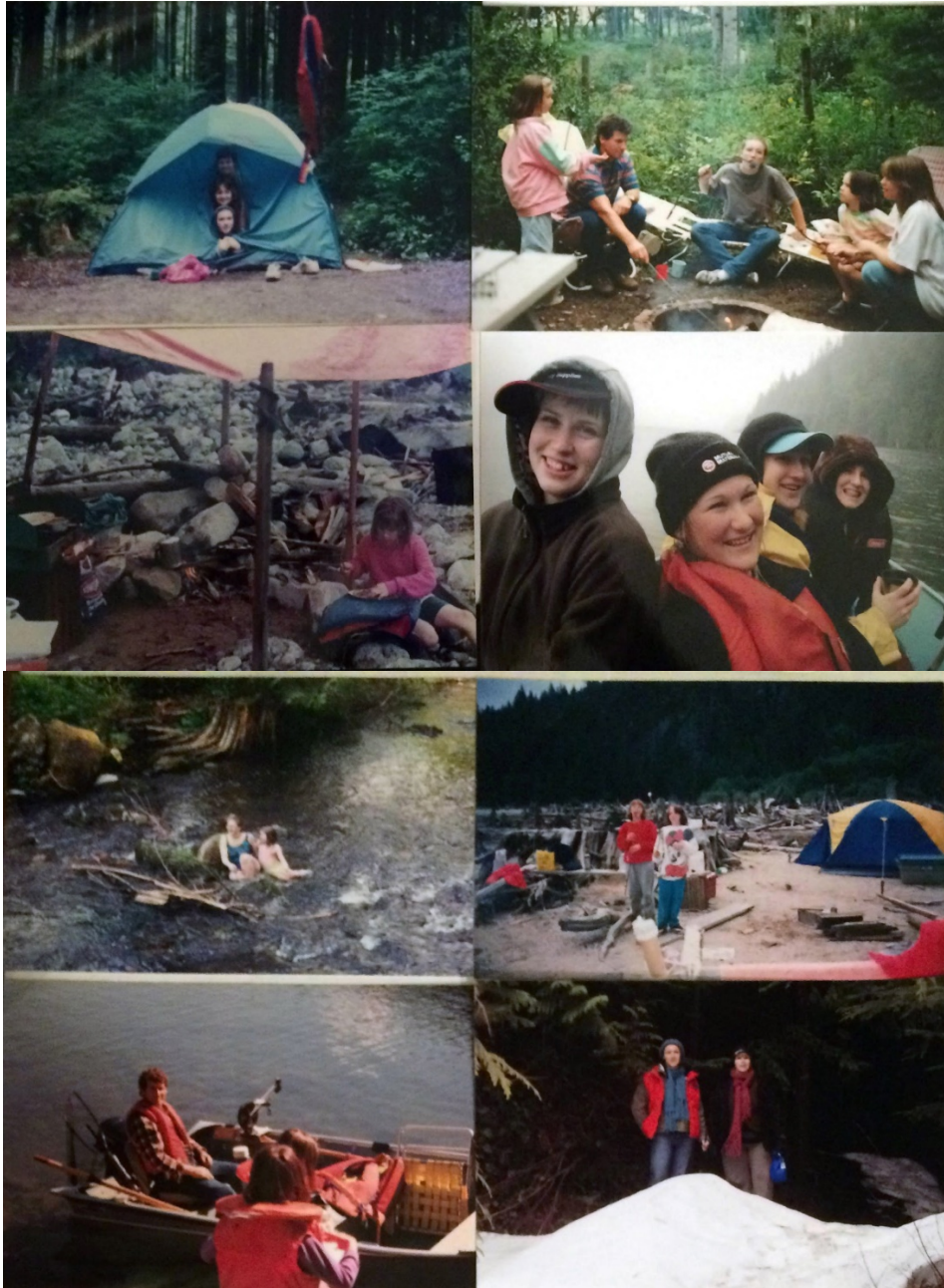
4 Dewdney Trunk Road



5 Dewdney Trunk Road

My parents moved to the District of Mission in 1979, a few decades after their parents’ respective migrations from Eastern Europe to other parts of Canada and eventually the Fraser Valley. I was born in Matsqui, which no longer exists as an official district, to the south of the river. I grew up camping not only in Mission, but around the province (at the time, camping was a relatively affordable way for a large working-class family to go on vacation). The general impression of forest park scenery was well familiar to me—pit toilets, sometimes one or two washrooms with plumbing if you were willing to walk, stump seats, rustic buildings, skinned logs, pruned clearings, lawns, ecological plaques with weather-faded pictures of plants or fish, information boards and interpretation centres built to resemble cabin frames with shingled roofs. The Mission sites, our most frequent destination, became familiar places for hiking, novel-reading,

daydreaming, outdoor games, swimming, fort-building, fireside stories, and escape from the suburban routine.



6 Author's family photos ca 1990-2001

Of my four field sites, this chapter focuses on two areas with high day-use traffic: Hayward Lake Picnic Area, which is managed by BC Hydro, and Rolley Lake Provincial Park, managed by the provincial ministry. I visited Rolley Lake and Hayward Lake three times during June, July, and

August of 2016. Both these sites are managed for day use, including firepits (except during bans), but only Rolley Lake has a campground attached. Both areas are part of the Kwantlen traditional territory, and that Nation has been particularly impacted by BC Hydro management of the Stave Lake Watershed, including the lands around Hayward. The idyllic—and heavily patrolled—recreational settings of the two lakes also contrast with rowdier and more violent activity in the surrounding Crown land, for which commercial, ecological, and recreational development have been suggested as cures.⁶¹

Practices

Grounded in sensory field observation and research-creation, my analysis “remediates”⁶² visual experience through an emphasis on sound and listening as means of deconstructing spatial hegemonies. It also turns to visual (re)composition for observing and deconstructing spatially enacted narratives. The chapter pieces together experiential reflections in tandem with analysis and illustrates these perspectives with photographs from my field sessions (my photographic practice is discussed in Chapter Four). It also draws ideas from the media worked produced for Chapter Five.

My primary practices, in addition to documentary research and theoretical framing, centre on site visitation (with and without recording instruments), media processing (sound recordings, photographs, and video), and multimedia composition.⁶³ During the spring and summer of 2016, I re-visited the lakeside grounds several times to deepen and challenge my observation of the structures and textures around me, the way I (have) relate(d) to them, and the situation of those relations.

⁶¹ See Chapter One and Chapter Two

⁶² For example, see Chapter One: Haraway (1988), Lefebvre (1991)

⁶³ These practices are elaborated in Chapter One

Theoretical Approach – Situated, Embodied Knowledge

Theoretically, I approach drawing on Gaston Bachelard's (1994) poetic phenomenology of *home* and *daydream*; Henri Lefebvre's (1991) critical inquiry of spatial expressions of power over time (i.e., capitalist-industrialist ordering of life-rhythms to maximize production); and especially Michel Foucault's (1984) *heterotopia* as structures of 'purification' and control over social risk and imagination. I also take up embodied approaches through what research-creation practitioners describe as metaphorical or processual space, and what Jonathan Sterne terms the 'sonic imagination.' My analysis of the 'fantasy' thematic pursued in this chapter further directs the line of inquiry in the other chapters.



7 Mission Municipal Forest near Hoover Lake

Unnoticed forms and patterns are essential to my questions about how situated reality is operationalized on different levels, through taken-for-granted spatial and poetic suggestions about relations and fundamentals. To identify poetic imagery, Gaston Bachelard (1994) fancies a phenomenological approach that focuses on constellating a "matrix that reverberates" with

associations, and from which "the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface" (Bachelard pg. xxiii; xxv). The form produced by complex associations, which the entangled architecture illuminates, is not any one 'reality', but a configuration of the subject's mind; or as Bachelard puts it, "the poetic image is a sudden salience on the psyche" (Bachelard pg. xv). In that case, my 'reading' of the forest will necessarily also be a reading of myself (but might also misrepresent both as static configurations).

Henri Lefebvre (1991), on the other hand, challenges the sufficiency of phenomenological and poetic interpretations. The space in which fancies are imagined, and the fancies which understand space, are produced not only by poetic experience, but through arrangement of material and human forces. What Lefebvre calls "absolute space" (space understood to be produced by 'nature' rather than culture) becomes associated with its social management. Through means of representation, hegemonic power re-orders "fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountaintop, spring, river), but whose very consecration ended up by stripping them of their natural characteristics and uniqueness" (Lefebvre pg. 48). These become spaces for "rites and ceremonies" and result in the 'management of space' by those not using it for production. What Lefebvre is describing is the consecration of space by authority for the work of symbolism (Lefebvre pg. 48). Noticing my own poetic experience in forest space, I provoke a 'matrix of imagery' affiliated with managed forest spaces. I pursue its constituents through my own daydreams as well as through cultural constructions and the work of power.



8 Stave Lake, photograph by Frank Krobath

Relating to theorists of embodied awareness, such as Donna Haraway and Pauline Oliveros, Jonathan Sterne (2012) advocates vigilant reflexivity about how modes of knowledge are concretized and how they naturalize the contexts and conventions which produced them. Rather than “misattribute causes and effects” (Sterne, pg. 9) by assuming that disciplinary typologies of sonic experience can explain universal principles or origins of acoustic perception, I ask how my sensory perception has been produced through forms of knowledge, and how attention to sound and listening can shift and unsettle spatial and cultural assumptions. To better understand how the acoustic paradigm can alienate and reorient understanding of place, I look to some examples from acoustic ecology and aural semiotics, including an emphasis on the concept of *texture*, or environmental ‘grounds.’



9 Rolley Lake Moss



10 Scenes from Rolley Lake



11 Rolley Lake Interpretation



12 Rolley Lake Waterfall

Other Textures

The moment of arrival at Rolley Lake comes to me as an abrupt change in the sonic environment—from the loud fresh tunnel of green driving, to the reverberant sounds of people and birds gathering around a watering hole. Cleared and acoustically spacious within that surrounding, the picnic site feels dreamy and peaceful—cut off from the outside world. The site feels remote, the destination at the end of an approach through travel space. The road presents as generic space, sharing a purpose with all other roads, and after enough speed, the sonic perspective underscores this through a wall of broadband sound that wraps the vehicle as it travels. Arriving at the parking lot, delicate gravel crunching signals the transition to enclosed space, with parking lot as transfer zone. In fact, the trees are mandated on either side of the road by municipal by-law, to hide industrial activity (at least ten feet on either side),⁶⁴ creating roadways

⁶⁴ See District of Mission Zoning By-Laws (2009-2017) and District of Mission Official Community Plan 2017, pg. 28

that feel like tunnels, which seem to cut through swathes of forest—broken occasionally by a glimpse of a quarry or the local landfill—until they reach the site.

Although the privately owned and Crown land here form a sprawling range, they are linked at access points and view points to signs of entitled occupation. Henri Lefebvre (1991) defined texture as “made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or webs” which are anchored by architectures of meaning. These architectures do not provide ‘readings’ of the space but more subtly suggest “a horizon of meaning” in which ideas can shift “for the sake of a particular action” (Lefebvre pg. 22). The production of space transforms objects into a holistic “texture,” which suggests a dominant spatial order (for example, commercial flows), determines the scope of social possibility, and implies a social spatial consensus (Lefebvre pg. 132).



13 LaFarge

Another textural impression of an environment can be signalled by cues in sound. During my audio field recording excursions, my attention was drawn to the phenomenon of reverberation, which suggested a sense of enclosure and an association with power to hold attention. This was especially noticeable in contrast to the 'information poor' quality of the drive, where loud broadband sounds dominate the acoustic experience and define the road-space exclusively in terms of forward movement. The static-like noise of the road contrasted with the moment of arrival and emphasized a change in function correlated with respective sonic properties.

Through sound kept 'in play' by interactions with surrounding surfaces, one moment is smudged into the next and time takes an altered appearance. Reverberation heightens awareness of structural surroundings while simultaneously suggesting surreality, dreaminess, and distance, including "the sacred or magical" (Doyle, 2005, pg. 42). The reverberating sounds provide mercurial multiplicity of associations, not least to a state of information richness (e.g. Doyle pg. 38). Peter Doyle explains that "animating" an interior by reverb (in this case a cathedral) with sound "provides a kind of theatrical effect"" (Doyle pg. 45). Surreal stretching of time, the presence of grand architectures, and continuity or conversation with the past are all evoked by reverberation. As reverberant spaces, the foothill sites provide sensory cues for transcendent and consecrated space and framing for performative play.



14 Stave Lake in miniature



15 Rolley Lake Boardwalk

Entering Forest Heterotopia

Heterotopia conceal the fears and risks of society by isolating an idealized environment where those risks are neutralized (Foucault 1984). Forest heterotopia can appear as microcosms for general ecological management, belying possible resource destruction or industrial exploitation. They also draw attention away from negative presences in the forest, such as criminal activity and industrial waste. The enclosed, peaceful, and ordered atmosphere of the nature parks can belie the sense of lawless activity in the wider forest but also the disorder of general society. They also obscure their counterpart, the dystopic heterotopia of control and containment, shrinking as park space grew, namely the Indian Reserves. This inversion represented what Foucault described as an "inverted analogy with the real space of Society" (Foucault, 1984, pg. 3).

For instance, at Hayward Lake, at the edge of the parking lot, just at the first step of grass into the park serve to transition from the roadway, a collection of notices reminds visitors to consider external concerns (locking the car, leaving forbidden items and behaviours) one last time before entering the domain of the nature park with its trails, picnic lawns, and beaches (i.e., leaving

'lawless society' and entering a becalmed zone). Likewise, the garbage cans at the periphery of the parking lots at both Hayward and Rolley suggest that our garbage can be left here – not taken away with us 'back into the world', but accepted into the thick forest system, and eventually digested or made to disappear when we are not looking. In this enclosure, the external disorder of the world is defeated by the serenity of park space.



16 Hayward Lake Signage

Contrasting the risks of the wild (or 'unsettled'), these sites present an ordered space amidst forest range, through an arrangement of information boards, lawns, amenities, and rules.

Elsa Lam (2008) analyzed the development of Canadian architecture aesthetic in relation to representations of Canada both within the nation and in British exhibitions, finding the aesthetic

performative of national identity that incorporated Canadian resource economies as a defining image while continuing to position Victorian sensibility at work in the same space. In representations of Canadian wilderness and frontier abroad, artists often juxtaposed Victorian artefacts as signs of civilizing progress.



17 Rolley Lake Picnic Lawn

In the Canadian setting, the presence of 'civilization' was often signaled in the form of English design features, particularly the lawn. Augustyn (2013) discusses the territory-signalling functions of lawns in rural settlement space. Not only does the lawn mark the boundaries of an estate, but it asserts dominion over nature by replacing indigenous plants and ecosystems with imported turf, flattening the uses of terrain to space where people can spread blankets or play field games. Moreover, tending the lawn becomes a sign of stewardship, while uncontrolled front yard growth suggests neglect or lack of ownership. At both Rolley and Hayward, the lawn occupies the central area of the recreation site. By centring the lawn in 'wild space,' forest sites reassert Victorian

domesticity and settlement as centrally 'organizing' the nature around it and providing 'civilized space.'



18 Hayward Lake Picnic Lawn

This framing of colonial settlement as the heart of progress within nature reveals a powerful heterotopic inversion taking place through forest recreation sites. As natural enclosures, they invert consciousness of the Indian Reserves, which in the Coastal Forestry Region where Mission is found, were tabulated and re-tabulated over more than a century to reduce range and access. The new drafts whittled down First Nations holdings through changing zones. They also involved at times enclosing families and communities on non-productive sites, such as bogs and stony terrain.⁶⁵ While these crowded and under-productive tracts of land were having enclosure lines drawn and narrowed around them, official enclosure and interfacing of therapeutic nature space was spreading.⁶⁶ The campground space also inverts contemporary imagery of homelessness, seen especially in the discourse around tent squatting as a demonized form of camping.

⁶⁵ See Chapter Two, McLaren et al (2011), Crockford (2010)

⁶⁶ see Chapter Two for further discussion

The enclosed nature park simultaneously reassures users that order and sustainability are prevailing, and that settler development has been idyllic—even while undermining this sense of security and justifying the enclosure by locating threats outside its bounds. By representing the enclosure as preserved space, frozen in an idealized pioneering past (as the following sections of this chapter demonstrate), forest parks propose managerially-produced harmony, while negating the impact of conflicts taking place around First Nations territory occupation, commercial/industrial development, and settler counter-cultures engaging in disputed or criminal activity.

Wild Forces and the Universe of Home

Bachelard (1994) calls home the first universe of a new person, a horizon of imagination made possible by negation of the wild within an enclosed space. This separation, the fence/wall, allows forming minds to daydream within a surrounding protective structure. The space of home allows—and comes to prime dwellers for—a formative mode of imagining the universe and conditions of life, defining the features of safety (or non-safety). Home, at its most basic, must be different to what is “outside the fence,” those particular dangers or unwanted intimacies that require exclusion from a safe zone, no matter how small or itinerant the enclosure may be. Over their lifetimes, people continue to seek, sense, and express architectures that connote home.

Bachelard (1994) argued that “all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home” (Bachelard pg. 5). As inhabited space, the house is also an enclosure of the self: “the non-I that protects the I” (Bachelard pg. 5). The power of home is both its connotations to pre-cognitive states of safety (i.e., in infancy) and the shelter it provides for daydreaming and development of the self (the mind can safely cease to attend to textural reality and freely imagine other realms). These features of home find their antecedents and forms in nature—roots, caves, nooks. Bachelard traces

the motifs of these spaces that emerge through form and human imagination, looking to literature and a psychoanalytic perspective. The movement from shelterlessness to shelter is definitive for human safety, and the potent contrast between wild space and safe space is ever present in the shapes and shadows around us. The threat of un-shelter is reasserted and defeated mentally and in bodily practice over and over.



19 Trees on Dewdney Trunk Road

Recalling the texture of home is to recall the space and mode of daydream, wherever a moment of peace can be found. Bachelard (1994) wrote that the imagination will make a home of shelter; this is exactly what children practice when fort making in the woods. Tree roots, complex planes, resonant spaces, and the canopy all suggest an intricate architecture. While the forest clearings suggest hallways and rooms, the dimensions do not stay put; as I move, the boundaries shift. As Bachelard put it, “we shall see the imagination build ‘walls’ of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection—or, just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls, mistrust the

staunchest ramparts” (Bachelard pg. 5). The imagination restlessly and compulsively reformulates the surroundings for signs of security and concern. Farina & Belgrano (2006) noted that animals also seem to “search for spatial configurations that assure the minor risk from predation” as they move in a site (Farina & Belgrano pg. 13). In other words, the unrolling or unfolding of space through movement requires constant calibration for vantage and security.



20 Thickness and Clearing at Rolley Lake

Moving through forest space can provoke powerful daydream structures and a child-like state within the wondrous, labyrinthine halls that seem to spring up spontaneously in the forest. For example, while growing up, my sisters and I explored the trees and clearings around the recreation sites looking for ‘secret places’ to make forts or fairy houses. In one of the field excursions in which I brought along my young nephew, I recorded him excitedly comparing tree

formations to rooms, stairs, and even an elevator. While semblances of home invite the start of fantasy, the dangers of forest space suggest firmer shelter might be required to satisfy the call to daydream.

At the beach area, I take the trail. As I gain distance, the hubbub of voices feels stranger. I can't see the swimming, the picnicking, the caught frisbees; they're hidden by the trees and the turns in the trail. But the sound is intense, a concentration of voices in one small area, using a strip of sand that has been trucked in and laid out for that purpose, their voices splashing off the water. Screams of laughter. The cocktail effect and the outliers. A watering hole made safe for people by enough of us gathered together. A watering hole we don't use for watering, but for play.

Playing the Past

With my dad, my sisters and I would hike and sleep in a tent. The sign says no unauthorized camping, but no one is here to check. The tree tops are like lace—like tents made of green lace. There is some disagreement in this town about what can be done when nobody is watching, and a sign from the city might hold less sway than an image of a shotgun and a keep-out sign. Mom prefers to take the tent trailer to the campgrounds. We carry the dishes in a pan, heat up water over the fire. This is before the rise of 'glamping' and RV microwaves and WiFi signal. People out here love camping. They go boating and fishing, hunting, biking, paddling, hiking. They ride ATVs and throw beer cans. The RCMP road checks at Frances Street wait for drunk boaters to hitch up and come home. At the popular spots we meet pit bulls on the path. On other trails we hear bears snuffling a warning in the bush. I've never encountered a cougar, but have seen it pounce in many dreams, and felt its eyes on my neck.

A crackle echoes in the trees, something small as a mouse, amplified. I know the mossy forest floor is a fearful place to tread, but I love its hallways and padded rooms, architecture of stumps and fallen trees. Glacial run-off, mountain springs. We dipped our toes. Notice the bait for sale at the gas stations along the way. The yellow or orange gates with padlocks that block access roads and gravel lanes. Human traces, notably beer cans but also tarps, tin cans, from time to time a boot or a tire. Fishing line. Don't forget the high-tension wires! About halfway up the hike to Hoover Lake, they cross overhead. Trailhead sign, 3km marker. Logging flags, pink ribbons on slender trees and branches. Logs floating around the perimeter. Sunken boats (at least two). Rust covered items in the murk at the bottom. More beer cans. Parking outside the gate and coming back to find my car vandalized. Driving some of these country roads to find the strangest things dumped: couches, metal barrels, tires, refrigerators, pipes, refrigerators, a kitchen sink.



21 Hoover Lake Access Gate

In contrast to undeveloped or industrial-zoned Crown land, forest recreation sites are not only accessible to the public but designed for recreation. Order is maintained with amenities and ranger patrol. Arrival and points of interest in the environment are signaled with museum

iconography, such as plaques about species or historical anecdotes. They suggest possible routes, activities, and points of interest. These are accompanied by signs of territorial occupation, such as posted rules, fences, pipes, electrical cable, road infrastructure, and lawns, as well as skeletal settlement features that suggest a benevolent presence has already been established (fences, trails, toilets, taps, rules). While the terrain suggests potential for discovery (through branching trails, scenic views, and nooks), the physical setting of the experience is also associated with a fixed pioneer aesthetic and official management iconography.



22 Hayward Lake Information Board

Trails are already laid down. The re-enactment is evident as the 'bushwhacker' here is in fact forbidden from straying into the 'stuff' between pathways (due to cited visitor safety and ecological concerns⁶⁷). In other words, while celebrating the trail blazing that led to the site itself, the

⁶⁷ For example, BC Provincial Parks ("Rolley Lake") and BC Hydro ("Take a Closer Look at Hayward Lake")

environment forbids contemporary trail blazing, preserving an 'unknowable aura' in the forest. This same knowledge-defying density kept early colonial surveyors in the Coastal region of British Columbia for accounting for activities and communities they could not see from their main route (McLaren et al, 2011, pg. 8). Moreover, they did not recognize infrastructures and passages not signaled in colonial terms. In other words, despite being previously established, trails produce a feeling of discovery based on visual identification of recognizable features from the path as it leads direction.

Through the work of imagination, supernatural dangers populate the forests and keep the inner space, including pathways, defined by safety. Camping brings participants to the edge of cold but rarely (in a monitored campground) to the point of freezing. Fire burns, but safely in the grate (although increasingly fires are prohibited due to brushfire in the hot season). The ability 'to fend' is central to the exercise, or as Susanna Moodie (1871) put it, "roughing it in the bush." The water pipe in the campground will smell slightly sulphuric, but on the plus side, normal obligations—like showering—will not apply. This temporary home – improvised, rustic, and quaintly idealized – always recalled a time before modern neighbourhoods and amenities. For that reason, 'glamping' (glamour camping or luxury camping) was often treated with suspicion (not 'doing camping right'; 'We come here to get away from the internet and our hair dryers, not bring them with us!'), and behaviours that disrupt the 'natural' aura of peace and quiet, such as loud music (but not loud children), are controlled by the rangers.

At night, the thin wall of the tent (or side of the tent trailer or RV, depending on your outfit), separates campers from creatures and elements outside. Signs warning of bears and cougars remind us that we are surrounded by dangers of the wild. Giant blue bear traps sit at the

edge of several campsites. The potential danger of animals and the visual thickness of trees around us contrast with the cleared, hearth-centred space of the campsite, presenting a time-shifted suggestion of the pioneer era, which is also mythologized widely in Canadian literature and British Columbia social studies education.



23 Rolley Lake Interpretive Area

The play performance of pioneer-type activity requires a surrounding wild, or at least the suggestion of one. Drawing on work by Juri Lotman, Prisca Augustyn (2001) identifies the folklore and “medieval social order” that shaped settler understanding of the forest. In this transplanted view of forest space, the forest “represents chaos, the anti-world...inhabited by monsters, infernal powers or people associated with them...” (Lotman, in Augustyn pg. 496). This identity of what the author calls an ‘anti-home’ also demands perpetually for organization and safety. By “preserving the image of an untrammled nature” as a foil for culture (Augustyn pg. 495), wilderness also preserves the sense of disorder and threat against which settlement organizes people and space.

To play with the imaginative architecture of the forest means playing with shapes of safety and danger, and to spot for proto-homes, defeating the threat of un-shelter. The tenuous shapes of 'home' in the terrain of danger can instigate existential fright, but the symbolic (and physical) return to safety resolves the tension by reminding us that we have escaped this homeless fate. The performance of camping is concluded with home-coming. This distinction is made clear through local attitudes around homeless people, who often camp by necessity but have the opposite social value attributed to them—useless versus resourceful, cowardly versus brave, without the right to be anywhere versus allowed *by law* to have a piece of land. Success or failure at 'homesteading'—at owning and improving property—is correlated to standing as a community member.⁶⁸



24 Rolley Lake Interpretation Area

⁶⁸ During settlement in the 1880s and for years after, the act of homesteading on Crown land in British Columbia entitled the settler to purchase the parcel at cost. This right was denied to First Nations and Chinese people (Moss & Gardner-O'Toole 1987; see discussion in Chapter Two).

Living at the Edge

Towns are often called the offspring of fathers (births, foundings, plantings), and like other new forms of life, they demand protection from a harsh world. Their residents are called members (just as hands and feet are also members of the body). The proposition that I grew up “inside” the region struck me as a spatial metaphor extending Bachelard’s romanticized room-womb to the town. After all, the water pipes flow through the neighbourhood outside the house and deliver water to the tap. So, life-giving water seems to come from the heart of the town, not the nipple of nature. Like Bachelard and Lefebvre (who drew spatial analogies to womb and phallus respectively), I argue that spatial architecture can conjure and/or upset the modes of home and procreation. This uneasy positioning between forest (wild anti-home) and paternalistically bounded and cleared spaces (proto-home) produces an imaginative landscape that reaffirms the boundaries of the community and the role of the managers, while providing thick and spatially provocative perspectives for imaginative role-play.

Although places seem to “take on a life of their own,” the idea that homes are discovered (like Bachelard’s hermit crab narrative) or spun for womb-like safety from environmental scraps (like nesting birds) overlooks the municipal organization that presupposes home-making in most developed areas. It also overlooks the land-base organization across multiple levels of government in this region that provided for some homes to be made and barred others. As Massey (1995) wrote, place is “constantly formed” and consists of “articulations of social relationships within and to the outside” (Massey pg. 186). Mission is often referred to as a city or a town, but its legal designation of ‘District Municipality’ is more suggestive of an arrangement than the other descriptors. The home may be an expression of personal inhabitation and identity, but the

organization of utilities and common space dispel its individualistic aura. The will of inhabitants to adhere to spatial organizations that allow homes to exist requires social effort.



25 Hayward Lake, Ruskin Dam Upgrade Notice

These outdoor sites are physically located in relation to industrial excavation and resource development. Processes of industrialization, which in an urban context are seen as crushing nature, here are instead the providers of first contact with 'pristine' nature sites. Management of their space is performatively and meticulously controlled. Foliage is managed through planting and pruning to provide a sense of botanical authenticity and scenic "visual asset" framing. The marsh is zoned for conservation but shoulder-to-shoulder with the recreational development zone where a new beach is to be built (McNab, no date). Compartmentalization of nature space is evident in the public relations, official planning, and tourism documents, which typically characterize forest recreation sites as wild, remote, or unsettled land. However, in this 'frozen time' of early homesteads, the work of ordering is always in progress.



26 Hoover Lake Powerlines

Conclusion

Michael Taussig wrote of the beach as another fantasy space where the experience of proximity to the ocean is shaped by social themes that simultaneously universalize elemental experience, while obscuring the lifeworld displacements that are happening through land and labour practices. Increasingly, the seaside is treated as an ambient backdrop, disconnected from daily life. Now, quaint historic ports belie the current realities of global shipping. Like the beach, the forest is consumed by the public as a fantasy space abstract from its modern functions. Eternally, it remains a thick, shifting place where things can be hidden. It is vastly architectural in its imagery and reverberant in its acoustics, creating the sense of an endlessly reformulating series of rooms, corridors, ledges, and nooks. By constantly recalling the home—yet also suggesting its antithesis—

the forest makes space for daydreams with dark undercurrents of threat and a constant prompt for safety. In this way, 'nature' materials provide imaginative fodder within pre-formed settlement frames.

Through their arrangement, forest parks suggest a temporal disjuncture between rustic, nature-based survival and contemporary property ownership and resource development. Thematic staging of forestry recreation promotes daydreaming and fantasia, 'frozen in time' pioneering processes, and repulsive-desirable wilderness. These elements express medieval, romantic, and modern forest imagery prevalent in Canadian cultural representations of nature and wilderness. Activating such a poetic matrix—a world of poetic associations, which tug on other associations or resonate with them subtly—can implicate social power and spatial control in the same instance.



27 Hayward Lake Information Board

Chapter Four Situated Knowledge and Creation: Sensing Dimensionality (multi-media composition)

Overview

In a series of vignette reflections (written and visual), I consider how research-creation practices 1) demand uniquely situated information be attained for the purposes of creating and 2) produce modalities that reorient perception and cognition. The creative practices of this project, whose goal is to sense and complicate phenomenological construction of *place*, unsettle my familiarity with *home* and *space*, turning them into situations of strangeness that produce insight.⁶⁹

In other chapters, I triangulate this insight with imprints of localized power structures and ideological narratives. Here, I produce creative non-fiction and media to contemplate process and modality play as tools for investigating situated world-making. Stochastic techniques (eloquent randomness) and analogue/digital mediation unfix perspectives in space and time—or conversely, reproduce attachments to meaningful structures. Representation and fantasy are a “salience on the psyche” (Bachelard, 1994, pg. xv) that can illuminate knowledge-beliefs and their material contexts, which can lead further into critical investigation and analysis...

Prelude

In the fog, some shapes come forward and speak to each other, silently. It's like a counterpoint, but that's not quite right. Not full convolution, either, but more mysterious and selective. Past configurations of myself return a hollow gaze from old poetry and childhood books. There will be material and virtual grafting of realities onto each other, until there's no way to tell where one ends, and the other begins, except a slow, conjectural untangling. Whenever I found a

⁶⁹ e.g. Peter van Wyck's approach to 'unknowing' through embodied observation, field compositions, and archival investigation that explore historical relations to place

new string in the web, it would fractalize in every direction, with smaller threads of their own doing the same. I got lost and dizzy following them into other parts of the soup, the soup of refracting dimensions, which are somehow, also, the beginning question.

What metaphor fits neatly in my hand today? I have been using myself as a divining rod. The self gets sore from this. Struggles, pains, uncertainties arise. The normal world becomes strange, its spaces and histories suspect. This is a promising sign.

Listening

A soundwalk is a contemplative practice of moving through a site while focusing attention on aural experience and observation. When I tried it the first time, awareness of soundscape opened a whole new dimension for me. A soundwalk can illuminate new properties of space, materiality, energy, movement, privilege and priority, and so on, even as it produces modes of fantasy and musicality—even meditative encounters with absence of mind. In other words, the soundwalk is an elegant and effective form of modality play.⁷⁰

An industrial street cleaner's combustion engine coming down the alley in Burnaby, BC, where I am staying during my first fieldwork trip, announces not only the presence of the machine but of resources, including production and transportation of the materials supporting this moment. The sound implies the truck, and the truck implies the tank for gas and the pipes that deliver it, not to mention the road itself. There has been policy written about what times of day the cleaner can do this and how loud its engine can be. So much space-time has been mobilized to bring this

⁷⁰ My soundwalking practice was modeled after Hildegaard Westerkamp (2002) with useful dimensions from writing by Andra McCartney and David Paquette (2012) and Andra McCartney (2010) and work on situated awareness by Owen Chapman (2015) and Sophie Arquette (2004)

matter to the street! But if I don't identify it—I'm preoccupied reading email, and absently feel the vibration, or it remains just out of my awareness—in that case, maybe it's not an engine at all but a monster on the prowl, or an ocean wave. A hint of earthquake tremor, or the memory that Canada Revenue Agency wants me to call.^{71 72}

At the forest sites, airplanes are present much of the time. In a setting of acoustic clarity, with small crackling branches enormously amplified, the airplanes reflect over mountains and water in beautifully pitched drones. The rising and falling drones of airplanes have the effect of ambient stretching, adding a slow dreamy quality to time, making the forest to the south seem thicker than it is by continuing to drone from beyond the highways, which we can't see. They trace a lid across the high blue sky.⁷³ I feel cocooned, the reverberant laughter and birdsong bouncing around me, nearly echoing. As I walk down the trail, the noise of the watering hole seems even louder, rising above the tree-tops. The airplanes above are harmonizing.

Threshold Shift

The first time I return to the Lower Mainland after an extended stay in Montreal, I uncover new wealth in a physical sense. I step off the plane and am hit by a wall of luscious, forest and sea-laden air. I had never noticed its smell and taste in this way before being away. I feel like a baby latching on to sustenance. Only through a change in situation has my body been able to sense this composition through the act of breathing.

⁷¹ Truax (1984) and Chion (2012) create typologies for modes of listening, describing different ways of aurally organizing the world according to function, plans, needs, and state of mind.

⁷² See, for example, Goodman's (2012) "Ontological Force of Vibration," Bull's (2012) "Audio-Visual iPod," or Arquette's (2004) "Sounds Like City."

⁷³ I began to formulate this textural sense of surrounding as an aspect of 'heterotopia,' a concept of Michel Foucault's that that became important in my understanding of forest recreation sites.



My nephew Julian, age 5, was one of my field collaborators. He leads me under a bridge along the Rolley Lake trail near the boardwalk and tells another kid we meet, "We're having sound!" In another track, he chastises me for taking the 'underthink' away from his brain as he throws rocks into a stony creek.

I pursue perspectival shifts to help me deeply consider the form and function of forest park spaces. Some tools include two different field recorders and a pair of headphones, to amplify sounds and translate them through microphone and speakers from different positions in the terrain. Heightening aural immersion this way helps me fix on overlooked sounds and phenomena. Encountering the space through the video camera also reveals some predispositions, such as which objects make for composition, how to approach and from what perspective, what signs and symbols are present, what textures, how the site design guides my view-finding, and how I also adapt recording techniques for the environment. I connect genres to my imagery, such as visual fantasia, abstract expressionism, and landscape portrait.



28 Forest Diving





29 Forest Diving 2 and 3



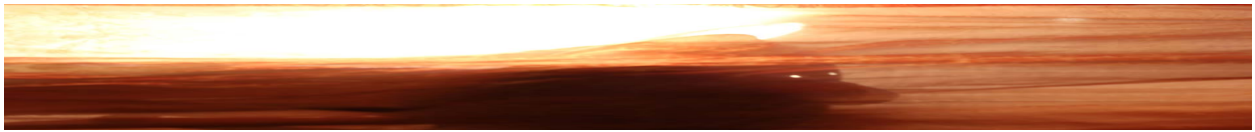


30 View of Stave from Hoover

Home-Making

Later, as I identify rampant imagery of *home* in my symbolic matrix, I explore shapes of home as I encounter them now, in shared housing situations in Vancouver and Montreal. Using visual media and audio recordings I focus on how playing with perceptual attention produces fantasy environments here. I observe my desires, the substances I require for *home* and *fantasy*, or safety and strangeness. Deconstructing my various apartments and dwellings, and the anxiety of unsure housing, I reconsider the tropes of 'outside the walls'; what, if not a wild nature, is the threat outside the walls? Asking my mind, it first produces tropes, not necessarily irrelevant, such as crime. There is also fear of losing my entanglement with space. Before moving to Montreal for studies, I

faced several “renovictions” and unsafe housing situations in Vancouver. Despite being a relative stranger in Montreal, moving through two major sublets during my time studying in the city, I felt enormous relief having a personal space to come home to. Even ‘home’ on a temporary basis thickens with clutter and grime of me, and my paths and preferred angles begin to establish themselves. I ‘put on the camera’ like a scuba suit and go diving.

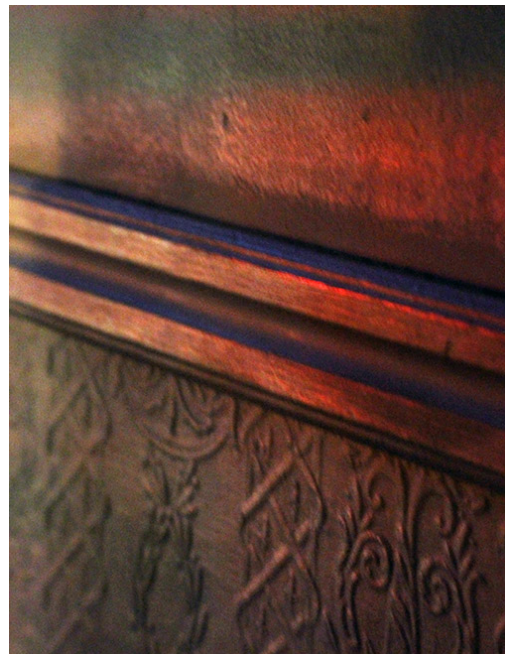


31 Domestic Fantasia 1

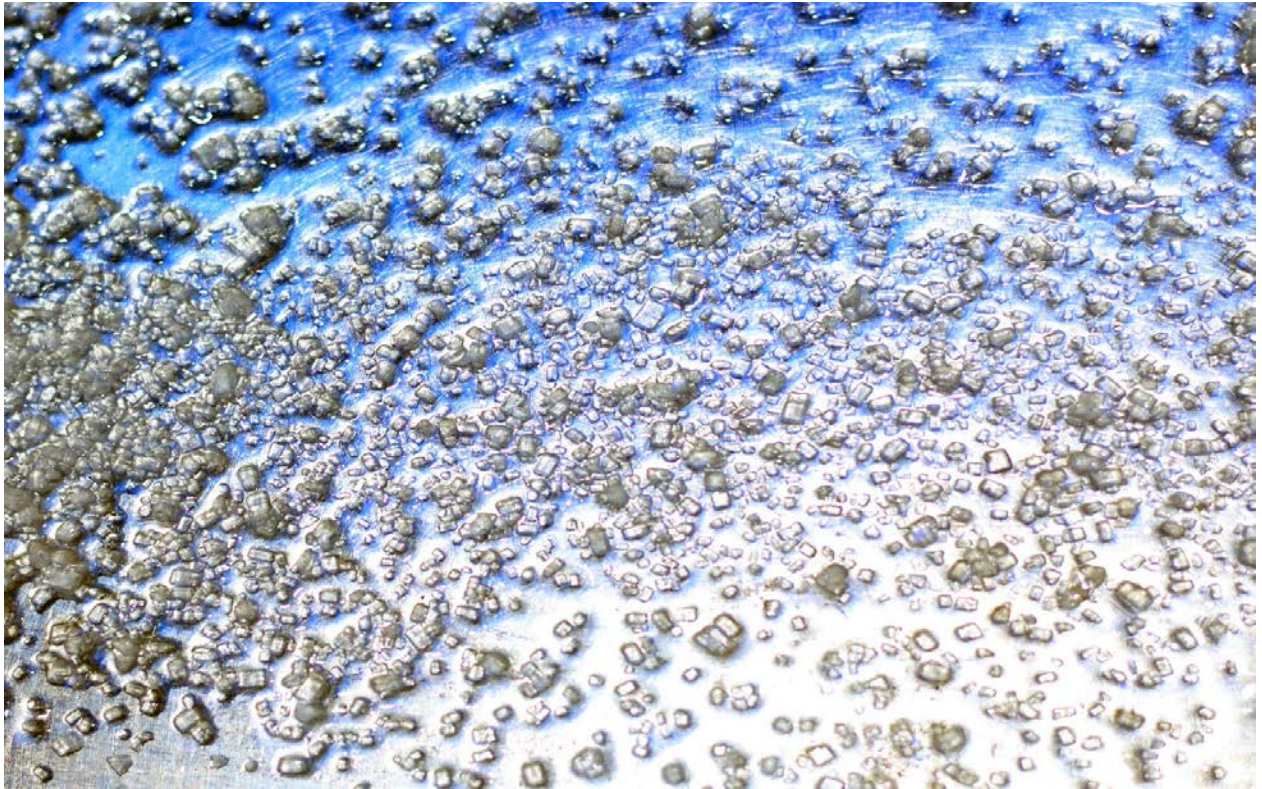
In filming, I watch landscapes in the small spaces between objects; a light shining in the sink, the scarf falling in front of the lamp. I experiment with the 50mm lens, which allows me to work on a finer scale with the depth of field. I audio record the washing machine, the refrigerator, the wind storm outside. I search for unreal moments.



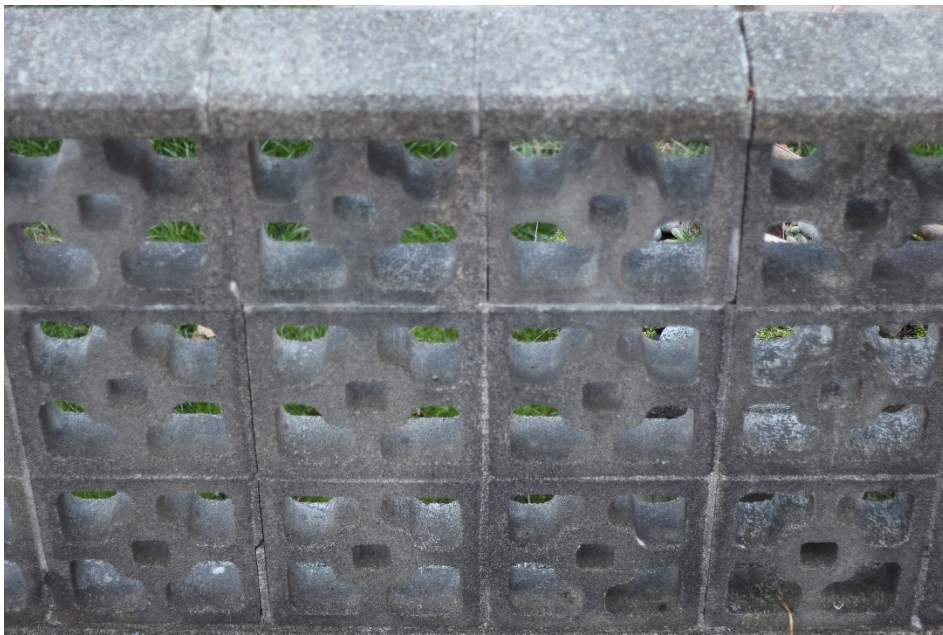
32 Domestic Fantasia 2/3 and 4/5



33 Domestic Fantasia 6 and 7

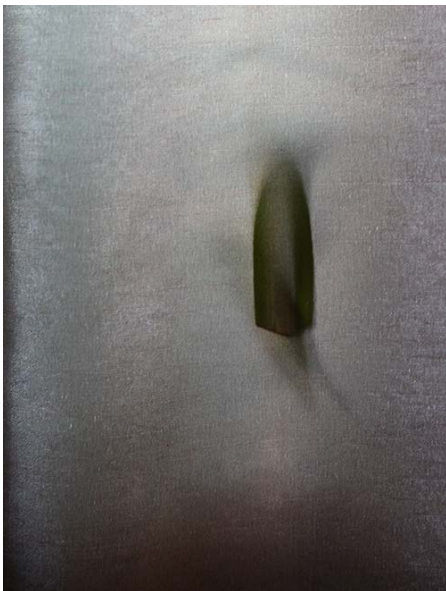


34 Domestic Fantasia 8 and 9





35 *Domestic Fantasia* 10, 11, 12



Put me in order, fearsome ruler. Straight-ways are more efficient for traffic. Corners, easier to connect. Walls seem to divide space, but this is an illusion—sound reveals a networked, continuous material.⁷⁴ Columns and rows. Measured steps, uniformity. Electricity dispensed in a grid. Destinations calculated, routes calibrated. In the channel and out in a jiffy, increasing signal, decreasing 'noise.' A fence, straight-edge, or lawn marks the bounds of cared-for space, according to gentry geometry. A tangle is by definition something to sort or abandon. A synonym is 'snarl.'



36 *Unflattened Terrain 1 (Watercolour and ink)*

⁷⁴ See Haraway (1988) and Lefebvre (1991)

Nature is the producer of fractals, in this brutal dichotomy. It meanders. Its forces defy hard-edges like seawalls and retaining walls. It spills out and over. What a mess. My body also suspects that straight lines are my enemy. My own cells bring order to materials at molecular levels, building up an organized system that will be 'me'—and the secret is to curve. I am a device of tangling, untangling, tangling. Nothing is gone, and it all comes back around.

When I look at my work, I see emerging forms as well as abstract relations. I try to translate the sense into shapes that don't fit neat geometric divisions or linear narratives. Landscapes you can reconfigure just by changing the way you look. Sometimes they morph into symbolism.

Question: does a story hide the mess by locating events in time?



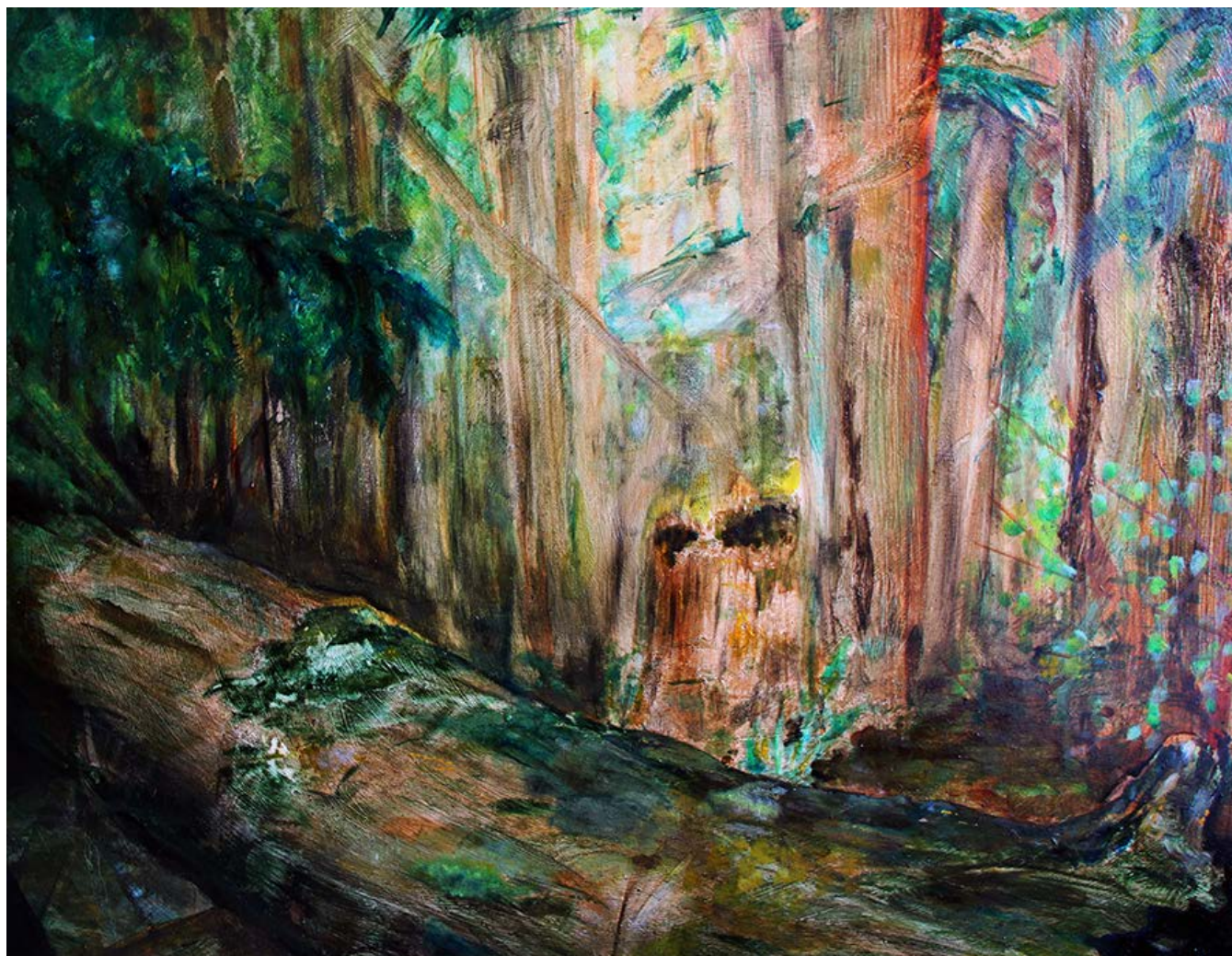
37 Unflattened Terrain 2 (oil pastel and photography)

Playing with Memory

When I first start writing down these memories, they are not quite stories, but inventories. I list the 'things' that I recall: the leaves, the ferns, the birds, the traces of human habitation I encountered, the signs, the pipes, the boats on the water. I write lists of activities, catalogues of sounds in the forest, things we bring camping, people we see. Already, I learn that memory for me is a container, and it holds these items, also called memories, not as many as you'd think, which you can conjure until you find yourself catching the scent of a moment.

Once I break through the lists, I find moments. Moments are crystals—they open and reflect each other, sometimes distorting an image or throwing sparks of light onto a nearby area. Somehow the act of writing, like automatic painting, bypasses the part of my brain that wants to think too hard and preform the idea of what will come out. This can get me into trouble, too. Events long forgotten appear on the page as if channeled by medium, at times casually cruel. Shaped into stories, these tell me a lot about who I think I am, where I think I came from, what I have been relating to. I recall the forest as the place for fort-building and fairy tales, and from these typical childhood exhibits, a whole world of meaning starts to appear.

Still in Montreal before flying out for fieldwork, I prompt myself to paint a scene at Hoover Lake, in the woods along the trail. To stumble into this forest clearing, I consider my situation now. The sun shining through the window of my apartment in Montreal casts shadows from the balcony railing across my bare canvas, and with some squinting, these become the trunks of trees. When I send a snapshot to my parents a few hours later, they recognize the forest trail right away.



38 Memory Painting of Hoover Lake (oil on wood)

As I proceed, there is some ambiguity. I have hidden the litter, that is understandable. The visuals of the forest lend themselves to idealization. I have arranged it scenically. Visual details and tricks enthrall me, but it's thin in the middle, as if threatening to be a mirage.



39 *Memory Painting of Hoover Lake (Ink on paper)*

This smooth articulation of so many biological purposes and geological events, spread out before my vision, is part of the pleasure. By not meaning to please me, it pleases me more, because I am the one making this master vision—but only the idea of it, the indulgence. Now comes a moment of catching my breath as the lake gleams into view through distant branches. This is the moment of arrival, at a place that I knew was waiting for me. The painting arrives there too, where I have arranged the place to wait.

Processing

These aren't really 'samples' of the environment, they are recreations of a set of pressure waves that pushed a microphone and got translated into computer bits (or light, or pen stroke). The semblances strike me—a glimmer of something configured once, an overlay, a spark trigger. Processing pictures, I ask what I'm looking for. Framing that tells a story, a captured moment of transfigured reality? Proof? Recurrence? The figure of a ghost looking out from the trees?

Composition / Collage

Composing the layer proposes relations between things combined. Expectations are adjusted or entrenched. These objects encountering each other come dragging their own worlds.

They make new patterns and terrains. They make a circuit with my thoughts and skin. I begin to see supernatural, wild fables, a dream. Still lurking, they go back to childhood, to a first nightmare. How quickly daily knowledge overtakes the momentous, and vice versa. Only these sinister vibrations, ghosting through space, offer continuity—or a chance to unravel.

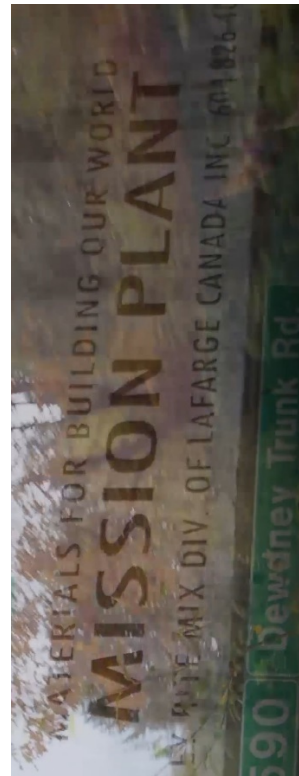


40 Birdchecklist and Social Media Mashup



41 Stills from video work





42 Stills from Video Work

Chapter Five I dreamt this was my home (audio-visual, 6min27)

Note: Film temporarily available at: <https://vimeo.com/244698674>

A full wind blew up the dust. With a crack, a rope of light shot down the sky, splitting it. The sky split... behind it... teeth and tentacles...behind it...

The world of memory hides in shapes and fleeting images, reflecting in my eyes, funnelled into my ears. Is it memory hiding, or is it me? Are those my hands at the edge, positioning the frame?

My voice whispers blasphemy, but it's not my voice. The wild, the wild. It's coming for you. Stake down the fence posts as fast as you can. Run the road, don't look too hard between the trees. Things are sleeping, things are prowling.

Uneasy, unspoken knowledge rises to audible frequency, but it's hard to pinpoint through the gleaming of time through the trees. We splash, we play. The wheels turn.

* * *

In this short audio and then audio-visual work, I build sensory worlds that mingle and layer impressions, memories, and motifs that constitute my sense of hometown and the roads that deliver people to forest spaces here. The soundscape samples were taken in public forestry areas of Mission, British Columbia, including Hayward Lake, Rolley Lake, Hoover Lake, Mill Pond, and the Dewdney Trunk and Lougheed Roadways. Voice work was recorded in the moving car and transformed digitally to produce the 'wordless narrator' who speaks to me as I revisit the forest haunts. The critical mode of approach undertaken for the project has deconstructed not only the production of backwoods space, but myself in it. Grief and strangeness reshape familiar moments.

Nostalgia remains. Visual images came from still photography and videography at the same sites, along the trails and roads around Mission. Filming also took place in indoors, where I played with light, reflection, and depth of field to implicate corners of home, like the kitchen sink and the bathroom, in the daydream of forest dimensions.

While the aural dimension builds a surreal space with textures and events wrapping around the listener, the visual collage has been linked as an experimental follow-up. It relentlessly shifts, presenting thickness as a visual screen beyond which the eye wishes to penetrate—but can't. The images deny a story, inviting the listener to seek for what's hidden, like the protagonist, beginning, and end.

* * *

Credits:

Audio/Visual field recording, processing, composition, editing, mixing by Helena Krobath

Recording assistance and additional audio recording by Petra Krobath, Frank Krobath

Field assistance from: Petra Krobath, Frank Krobath, Julian Shepit, Robert Neubauer, Hendrix Krobath

Funding by: SSHRC and Hexagram

Exhibited in-progress at the Feminist Media Studio (Concordia)

Conclusion

The formative moment I describe in Chapter One, when the crows flapped up in the air above me and chastised me for relying so heavily on indicators of what is real, was not followed by a smooth transition to empowered and critical perspectives. On the contrary, I felt nervous and isolated, because many beliefs and understandings were becoming alien to me as my knowledge changed. In this project, as I research how programs of land management have developed and come to be identified here, I feel again that sense of waking up inside a construction. It is built of familiar worldscapes, but not natural or inevitable at all. The story seems to always come after the fact.

Through this work, I have practiced altering my perspectives through mode and process play, to contemplate constructions & deconstructions of forest thematic and geometries of order. I come back to the fractured microcosms of former years with new questions. The ghosts swell in the back of my mind as I produce art and writing exploring my relationship to forest space. As I spill out stories and representations of the sites, the vine roots of 'old world' chaos and Christian terror grip my contents and wrap my spine. When I shake them, I find all kinds of other things: old X-Files episodes filmed in these woods, the memories I buried with my baby teeth, stories from before words meant things to me, scraps of other people, rusty things found under earth. Uncovering and deconstructing this fantasia through research-creation leads me to new understanding of myself, the forest, and our relationship as co-constructions that are situated in projects of power and poetic world-making that entangle space and experience.

Forestry heritage is centred around industrial history, which is portrayed as the force that “opened” a hostile land, for the benefit of all. This image of force is positioned against a harsh territory devoid of progress. Colonial claims present themselves as ‘foundational’ rather than itinerant or expropriating, and top-down management science underscores that claim. Site infrastructure and messaging encourage not only ecological interpretations and recreational activities but offer historical contexts that signal authorities and appropriate uses, such as organizing the ‘wild’, homesteading, treading carefully, and appreciating ecology. The textures of the sites promote potent play and fantasy, creating a sense of separation from the ‘everyday world.’

Articulating spatial stories in world-building further illuminates structures of imagination, assumptions, and values that delimit conceptual possibilities and produce explanations for the status quo. When they go unnamed, with their distortions only encountered through peripheral senses, they continue to imbue the fabric of reality with unease and call for reassuring interpretations. Suspecting this does not diminish the beauty of second-generation trees or the impact of recognizing my past in a witch’s hut that may lurk behind a dark thicket, hiding from the devout in forest reflections. It does not diminish the loss of communion or the pain of alienation from familiar terrain or the desire to meet space here again on different terms. Rather than deny these (dis)connections, I begin to engage with the power of ‘losing reality’ as a mode of research, asking myself how I can take responsibility for producing and conceiving the world in which I operate.

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